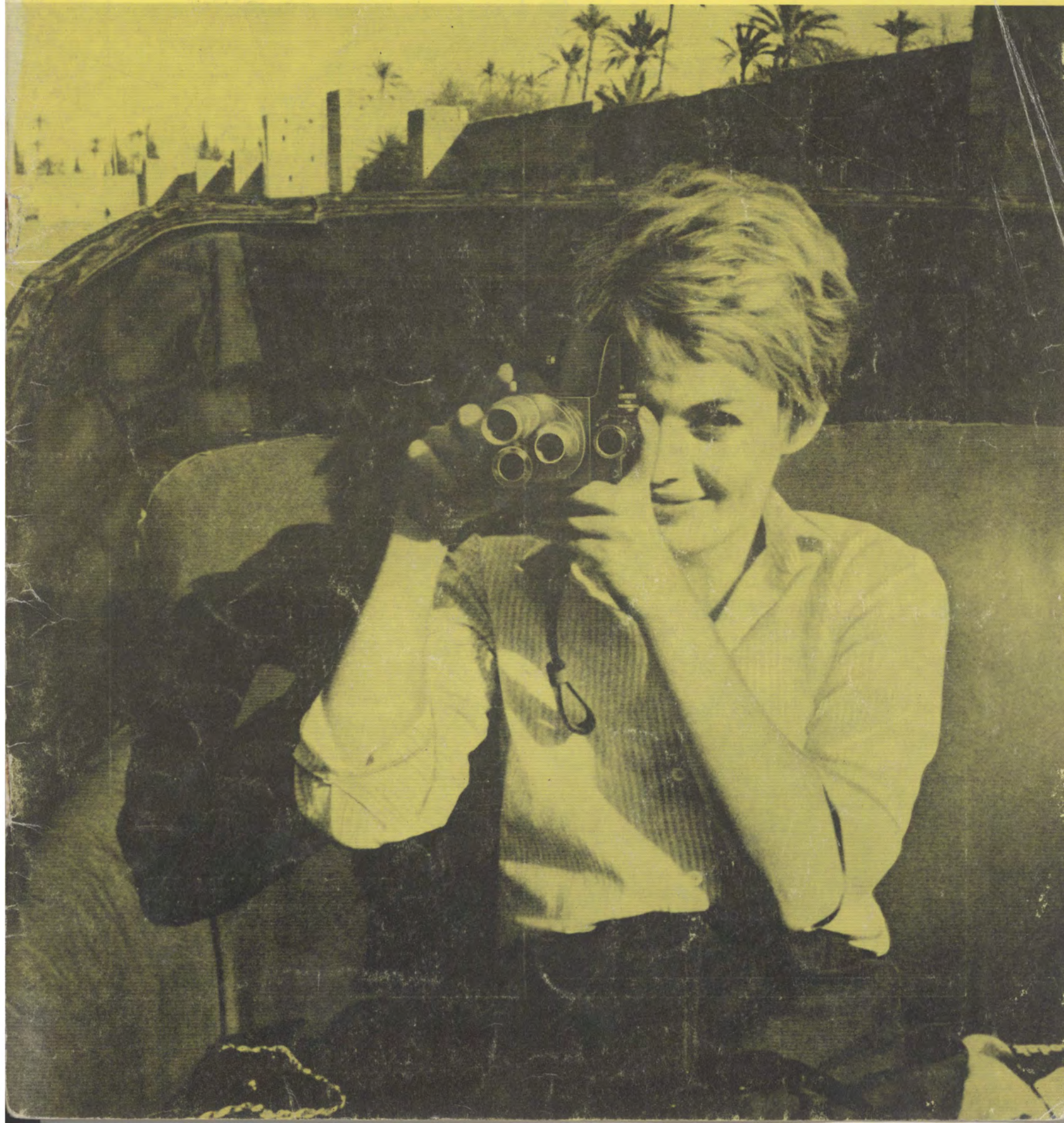


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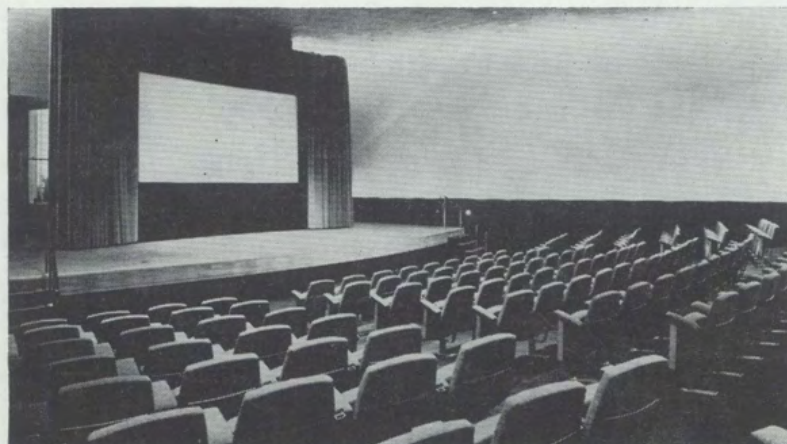
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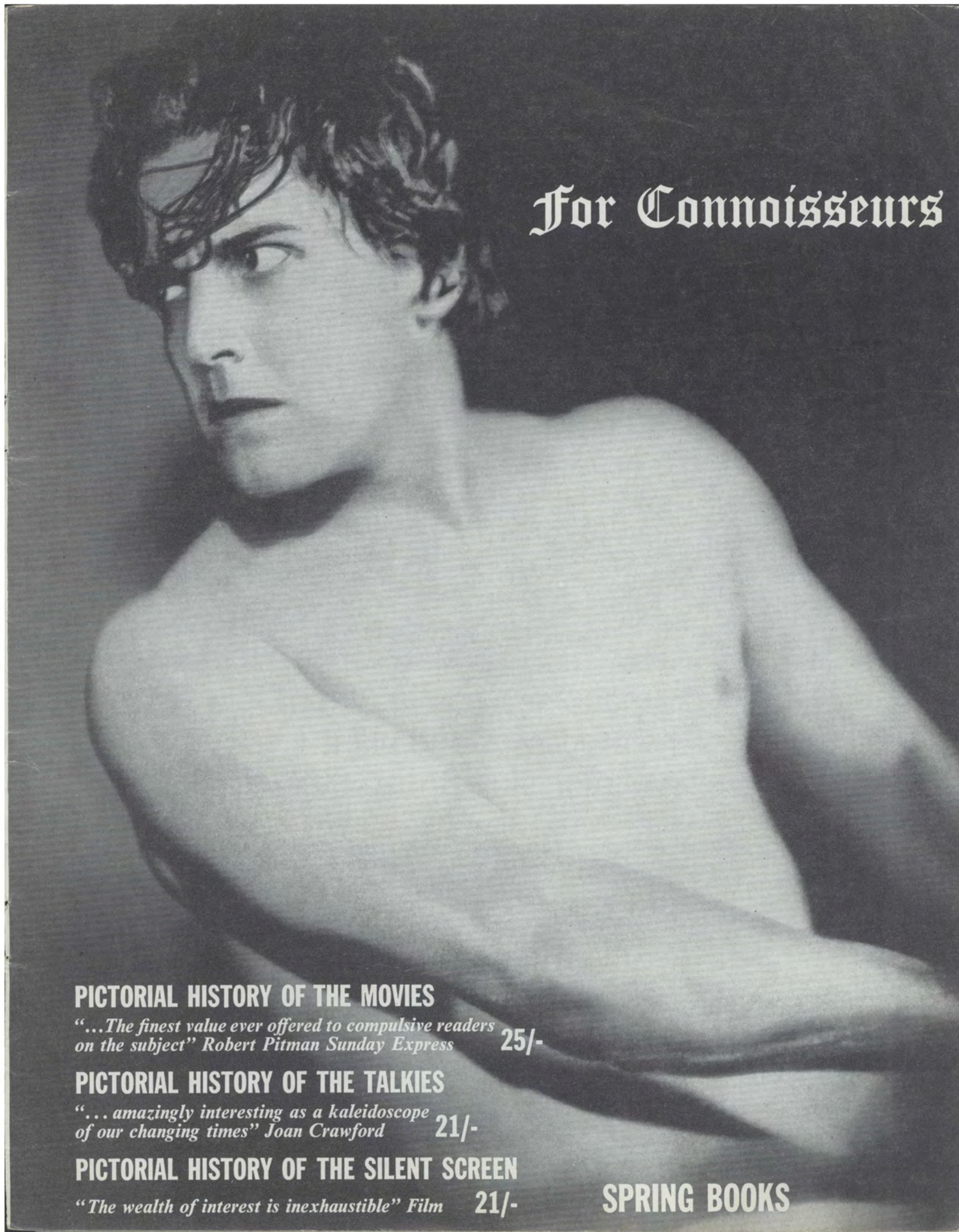
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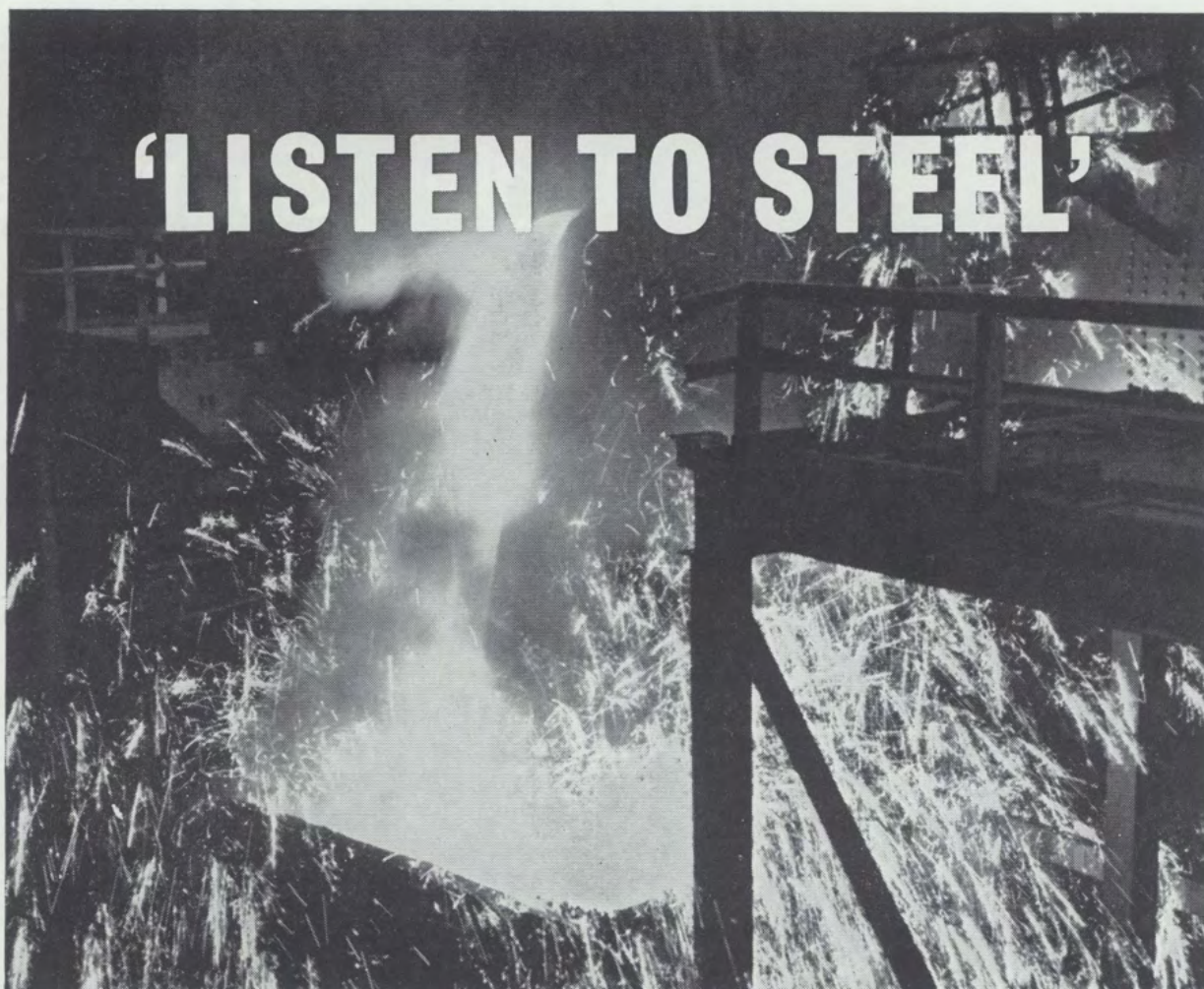
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THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

CONTENTS SPRING

1964

VOLUME 33 NO. 2

FEATURES

- 62 Ten Questions to Nine Directors
- 73 In the Picture
- 76 Buñuel's *Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre*
- 90 Film Clips: ARKADIN
- 103 Correspondence
- 104 Current Film Guide

ARTICLES

- 55 State of the Studios:
JOHN GILLET
- 68 How I Learned to Stop Worrying
and Love Stanley Kubrick:
TOM MILNE
- 78 The Organisation Man:
PENELOPE HOUSTON
- 82 Interview with Federico Fellini:
GIDEON BACHMANN
- 88 Fog at Knokke: ELLIOTT STEIN
- 92 Yasujiro Ozu: CHISHU RYU
- 99 Can the Leopard . . .?:
BRENDA DAVIES

FILM REVIEWS

- 93 Le Joli Mai: MICHAEL KUSTOW
- 94 The Lizards: ELIZABETH SUSSEX
- 94 The Leather Boys: PETER HARCOURT
- 95 Le Soupirant and The Pink Panther:
DAVID ROBINSON
- 96 Nothing But the Best:
JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR
- 96 Les Vampires: RICHARD ROUD
- 97 Mamma Roma: PETER JOHN DYER
- 97 Sex Can be Difficult and I Nuovi
Angeli: J. H. FENWICK
- 98 Charade and The Prize:
PENELOPE HOUSTON
- 98 Irma La Douce: ELIZABETH SUSSEX

BOOK REVIEWS

- 101 Thank You for Having Me:
PENELOPE HOUSTON
- 101 A Million and One Nights:
JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR
- 102 Magazines:
GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH

ON THE COVER: Jean Seberg in Jean-Luc
Godard's sketch from *Les Plus Belles
Escroqueries du Monde*.

SIGHT AND SOUND is an independent critical magazine sponsored and published by the British Film Institute. It is not an organ for the expression of official British Film Institute policy; signed articles represent the views of their authors, and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

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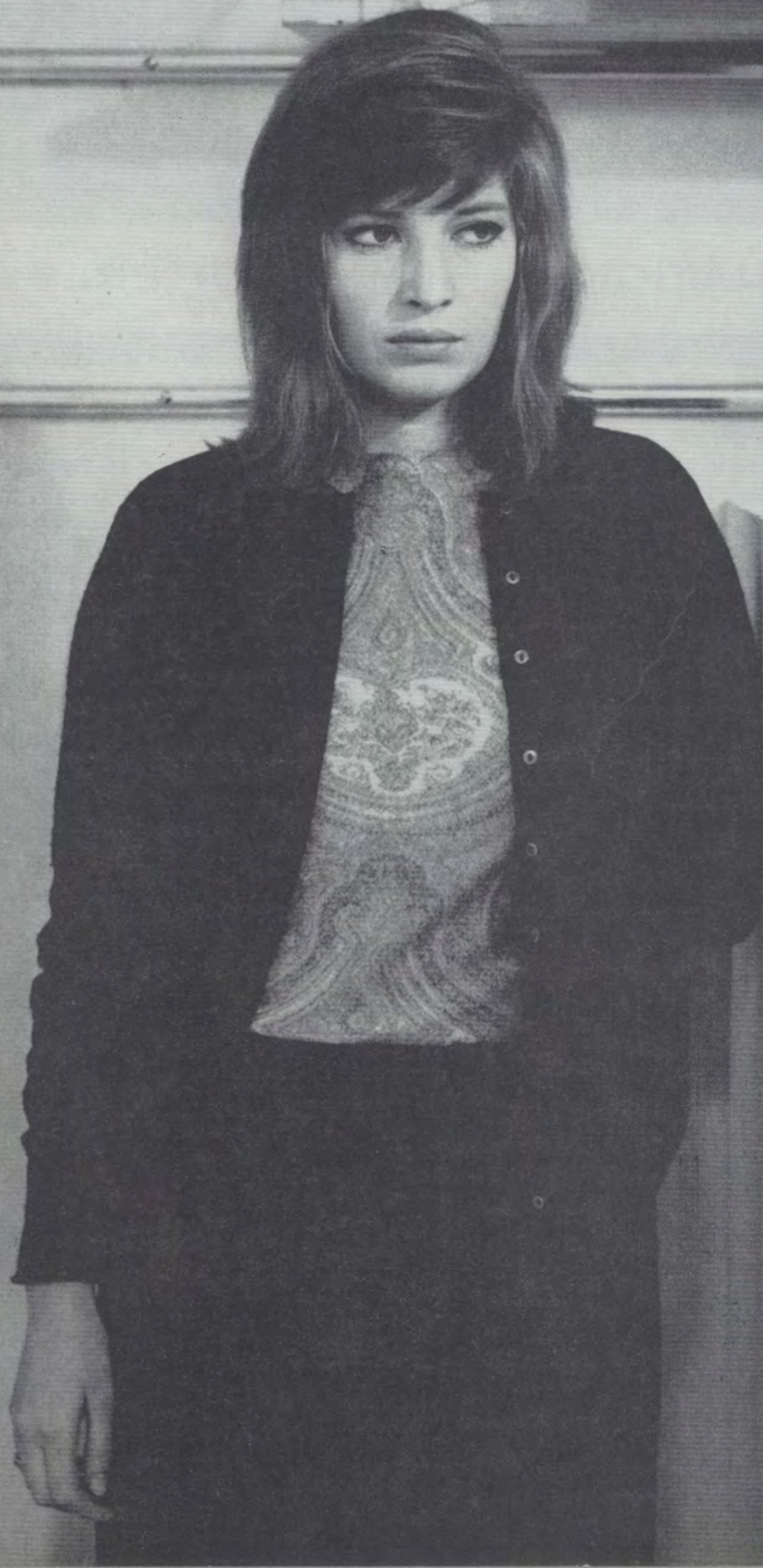


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AT THE TIME OF WRITING, there are only four feature films on the floor in British studios, and three of them are being made by American directors. Crisis talk in the film business during recent months has centred first on delays in the release of films, part cause of the temporary slow-down in production, and then on all the complex issues involved in the British Lion sale, and the anxiety of the independents to maintain their position as a "third force" in the industry. One thing, however, which has hardly been suggested by the various spokesmen concerned—by representatives of Rank and ABC, by the groups of independent producers, by the NFFC, or by M.P.s on either side of the House—is what kind of cinema they might choose to see, in terms of a production policy and of actual films.

James Bond is king of the box-office, though he is unlikely to put in an appearance more than once a year. A Rank hospital comedy with Norman Wisdom has broken more records. And there is a new Cliff Richard film in the offing. Such sure-fire hits apart, there are few certainties, either commercially or artistically. It seems likely that studios will think increasingly in terms of the fairly big budget picture, nowadays probably the safest commercial proposition. But this makes it the more important that a way should also be left open at the other end of the scale, for fast, low-cost picture-making on some continental and American models, to encourage adventurous film-making at not too extravagant a financial risk.

At the same time, we seem to be moving out of the era in British films that began with *Room at the Top* and *Look*

JOHN GILLETT





"MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH": ROGER CORMAN REHEARSES A SCENE BETWEEN JANE ASHER AND VINCENT PRICE.

Back in Anger and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. The mood is changing; the news from the studios is of Tony Richardson's plans to film *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, of Peter O'Toole's forthcoming *Lord Jim*, of the casting of Honor Blackman as Pussy Galore, Bond's girl friend in *Goldfinger*. Meanwhile, the two most exciting films to have come out of British studios in recent months have been the work of American directors: Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* and Joseph Losey's *The Servant*.

An American name on the credits is not in itself, of course, any assurance of a different line of approach—Robert Wise's *The Haunting* would probably look like the same old bag of tricks if made in either country, and the actual physical appearance of Carl Foreman's *The Victors* seems to belong to a very British tradition. But the fact remains that some of the virtues of *The Servant* and *Dr. Strangelove* spring from their unfamiliarity within a British studio context. One does not need to subscribe wholeheartedly to the *auteur* theory to be convinced that this quality derives as much from Losey and Kubrick's strong personal style and drive as from a lucky amalgam of technical talent (for further proof, one has only to note that the stylish camerawork of Losey's *Blind Date* is by the man who shot *The Victors*). In Losey's case this individuality manifests itself in the way the décor in *The Servant* is integrated with the development of the characters (the house literally grows around master and servant); and Kubrick deliberately turns his camera into a probing, hard-textured newsreel eye in *Strangelove* and imposes an overall style in the lighting of his magnificent war-room set.

May such films be pointers for the future? Is there any real difference between the nationalities in working methods and in the atmosphere created on the floor? Can British studios learn anything of value from the Hollywood-trained directors now working here? Are there areas in which film-making could be speeded up to advantage? Is there scope for more low-budget filming which would not necessarily be restricted

—as it so often is in Britain—to the second-feature market? The questions are far too complex for easy answers, but one place to follow them up is the studios themselves.

* * *

In order to look for some of the answers at close-hand, I made two trips to studios where American directors were working: Roger Corman on *Masque of the Red Death* (A.B.P.C., Elstree) and Blake Edwards on *A Shot in the Dark* (M-G-M, Elstree). Corman, young, alert and extremely voluble on all subjects and especially on his own work, learnt his craft on dozens of second features before he received critical recognition for his Poe adaptations. He came up the hard way, in fact, often fashioning a story from dog-eared sets and minuscule budgets and doing it quickly (his schedules range from two and three weeks to 2½ days!). He had been able to spread himself a little more on this picture, however, and as we walked around the big ballroom-cum-banqueting-hall set, with its smoke-soiled fireplace, pendulum clock and exotic furnishings, he was obviously pleased with the quality of the craftsmanship ("as good as I could get in America"). A second stage housed a sumptuous bedroom and sunken bath flanked by two gold swans, which provoked a joking aside as he passed: "is it a bit too ornate, perhaps?" The story centres on black magic, and Corman seemed intent on extracting the maximum pictorial effect from his richly dressed actors as well as his décor. Issuing instructions in a clear, soft voice, he worked out some movements with Prince Prospero (Vincent Price, of course) in a way which suggested they understood each other's intentions almost before they were expressed.

Swathed in a voluminous robe and cowl, his face shining with imitation blood, Price held a back-breaking pose while a tricky split screen shot was being lined up, and then slipped out of the set to pick up his cigarettes and resume a discourse on his art researches in London ("I always regret these interruptions to conversations"). After conferring with his cameraman, Corman turned to the rather noisy technicians crowded into the small set and raised his voice for the first time: "Just listen to what I'm saying now. Please don't touch anything." When the split screen shot was completed, a major re-arrangement became necessary; Corman left the unit to get on with it and walked around an adjoining set chatting with some actors. When all was ready he returned, head slightly bowed and an expression of intense concentration on his face. Now he seemed to be all over the place, checking a door which closed awkwardly, ordering a small platform to be repainted, and briskly wafting some extraneous smoke off the set ("this isn't a fog scene").

Towards the end of the day, the entire unit was whisked back to the ballroom for a staircase shot of an eerily lit Price in front of a glittering candelabra. The shot involved a quick forward camera movement; after rehearsing the movement, he shot three takes. It was 5.40 p.m., but Corman wasn't quite finished although I sensed that some of the crew possibly thought he was. Sprinting across the floor, he hurriedly settled on a camera set-up in one of the anterooms. Extras were called and placed, Price resumed his death-like gaze and walked majestically forward out of the room. "Cut," cried Corman after the first take. "You can all go home now." Here, clearly, was a director used to working fast, with a sharply defined mental image of what the next piece of film was to contain and a talent for improvisation when necessary. I also got the impression, later confirmed in conversation, that he was not achieving results at quite the pace he was used to.

By contrast, the atmosphere on Blake Edwards' set seemed

much quieter and almost cosy. When I arrived, Herbert Lom and André Maranne were rehearsing a short dialogue scene in a studio park representing the grounds of a nudist camp which figures prominently in this crime comedy. Edwards, lurking near a tree and wearing a light sweater, dark glasses and long thin cigar, listened to Lom's suggestion that he should change a line to get a better play on words, and then shot several takes of both versions. "That's funny," Edwards chuckled, and suggested an even ruder version which they didn't use. Moving round a high wooden fence which separated the camp from the outside world, someone uncovered a small hole in the wood, rails were laid in front and the camera set up for a forward tracking shot. Arranging shrubs and fixing lights took quite a time, but eventually a scantily clad Elke Sommer and Peter Sellers appeared, stationed themselves in front of the hole and played a short scene which was shot through it. Edwards rehearsed it several times with slightly altered camera positions. Between times, relaxed and gentle, he joked with the crew and played with his children, who were visiting that day.

Back in his dressing-room, Edwards expressed himself as very satisfied with his lot. "I was warned of certain difficulties, but I have had a very good experience here. We are on schedule; I've had hundred per cent efficiency from the entire crew. There is a lot of enthusiasm and I'm as satisfied as I would be at home." What about his recent experiences in Italy, I asked? "Quite terrible. Outmoded equipment, confusion and bad management. I even had a strike on the set with fights. Maybe I had too many Americans on the crew and they resented it. There's absolutely no comparison here. And I don't think the efficiency of Hollywood is all that it's cracked up to be—at least not now with the economic worries. I'm averaging about three pages of script per day here against about 2½ in America."

I left Mr. Edwards with his crew, his cast and his family, a contented man.

* * *

ROGER CORMAN: "I just could not get the shots in five weeks here which I could get in three weeks in Hollywood. Once they put the lights out at the end of the day in the middle of a scene, which has never happened to me before."

BLAKE EDWARDS: "If I had to make another film here, the only thing I would wish for would be slightly better weather."

ANDREW STONE: "You can do good work here but the cameramen and some other technicians are a little backward, especially if you want to shoot my way."

Three American directors . . . three contrasting viewpoints. One of the difficulties I have experienced in assembling this report is the problem of equating the highly divergent opinions expressed by directors and technicians with whom I have talked. Clearly, the reactions of Corman and Edwards were related to the pressures and lack of them in the former's five-week and the latter's twelve-week shooting time. Apart from questions of temperament and working methods, a longer schedule and a handsome budget obviously helps. Also, American directors working here for the first time are unlikely to know the reputations of British studios as well as home-based technicians, from whom I gather that A.B.P.C. is regarded as rather more of a stickler for regulations than the M-G-M studio down the road. But Corman, despite a slower tempo, sees many advantages in working in Britain, notably the lower production costs, and the benefits both of co-production financing and of Eady money.



"A SHOT IN THE DARK": AN OFF-BALANCE PETER SELLERS IN A SCENE FROM BLAKE EDWARDS' CRIME COMEDY.

One thing seems certain: there is no kind of anti-foreign complex in British studios as such, although reactions must inevitably vary according to the atmosphere generated by the director the first day he sets foot on the set. Also, acclimatisation seems a matter of primary importance. British directors and technicians of the older generation have grown up with a studio system which sometimes means sudden, inconvenient union meetings, hesitancy about experimenting with time-saving technical innovations, and tricky situations regarding overtime. On the other hand, a younger director such as Tony Richardson has found a working method which means a virtual breakaway from the studio. His last three pictures have been made entirely on location with a hand-picked unit of permanent collaborators, thus avoiding the hazards of working in a studio with many people who, in the words of his cameraman Walter Lassally, "have not been chosen by anybody." The Woodfall system means that the director can choose down to the last man. Normal studio practice, as an E.T.U. official defined it for me, is that a film-maker requiring, say, two electricians, would be expected to pick one from among the first half-dozen names on the union waiting list, but would be free to choose the other from any part of the list.

The implication here seems to be that shooting on location is likely to give a director a freer hand, although this will depend largely on the type of subject, the preference of the film-maker and the efficiency of his production manager. For big budget productions with large crews and much equipment, it could set the costs rocketing. As for degrees of efficiency both inside and outside the studios, one cameraman expressed himself as follows: "It is important to have comprehension of the subject. You are likely to get a better atmosphere and co-operation from a unit making a Norman Wisdom comedy than from the same unit making something less straightforward. Some technicians and crews tend to give their greatest respect to those directors and artists whom they can

recognise as fellow technicians rather than to those with an individual vision." James Clark, an editor who has worked in Britain and France, added his own comment: "A crew will work harder and more enthusiastically for a director who they feel is interested personally in them and their job. This generates respect."

Likewise, leading technicians (cameramen, designers, editors), who invariably take a justifiable pride in the work on hand, are quick to respond to a director's know-how (or otherwise), irrespective of their feelings as to his particular ideas or style. Christopher Challis, who has photographed films for many leading British directors (Michael Powell is one of his favourites) as well as Losey's *Blind Date*, found no marked difference between British and American directors in matters of speed or efficiency. But he clearly felt a particular stimulus in working for a director like Losey, with his closely defined ideas on camera movement and design.

All this seems to bring us back to the problems of individual talent, temperament and the ability to get on with people. But what happens when a director cannot achieve this understanding? Yet another American visitor clearly felt that he had been hampered by the alleged British studio vices: slowness, lack of enthusiasm, an inability to anticipate directorial wishes. He also thought that the players were insufficiently mollycoddled, and started to make these complaints from the floor. The crew, on the whole, resented this, believing they were doing their job in the customary way, whereupon the director reacted with open sarcasm.

This is probably an extreme case, and there may have been a lack of give and take on both sides. In another area, a film-

maker like the very experienced American Andrew Stone, who has perfected unorthodox methods of shooting on location involving manoeuvrable equipment and the minimum of lights, is likely to find resistance in any country from technicians trained in a different tradition. Yet Stone's complaint that cameramen, in particular, are liable to tell you what can't be done instead of trying a new way is an oft-repeated cry in other circles as well. More relevant to this survey are Corman's allegations listed above, and Walter Lassally's outright statement to me that "If I were to direct a film in Britain I would not set foot in a British studio as long as present conditions exist . . ." Such comments clearly call for further elucidation.

* * *

As far as Mr. Corman and the lights are concerned, most people seem to agree that this was an exceptional occurrence. The associate producer on *Masque of the Red Death* kindly gave me an explanation, prefacing it with the comment that he felt the director had not been fully alerted as to British overtime practices. Many electricians feel that, apart from the inconvenience, the financial incentives to work one extra hour are insufficient. They would prefer to work four hours overtime, on certain occasions, since the financial reward is much greater and the inconvenience proportionately less.* This situation applies to the industry in general; and my informant added that American electricians are often eager to work overtime since the pay is much higher than in this country. But the fact remains that on this occasion the lights were switched out; that the director did not finish the shot; and consequently that he could not get the precise effect he wanted.

Film studios are not the only organisations beset with this kind of difficulty. Their problems, however, are special, and in most of the cases one hears about it is the creative artist who has to bear the brunt. Clearly, the industry recognises its own responsibilities in this respect, and the November issue of the *Journal of the British Kinematograph Society* contains some challenging statements by leading industry spokesmen. John Terry, managing director of the NFFC, urges the unions "Not to restrain and hamper the progress and evolution of the industry on whose future success the Union members themselves depend," and speaks of the need to overcome antiquated methods. Baynham Honri, for many years studio manager and technical supervisor at Ealing, deplores the fact that despite all the reports and suggestions from investigating committees, "The result of all this effort has been negligible. The daily output of cut film per stage remains at the average of three minutes per day compared with television's thirty minutes." Mr. Honri also hints at resistance to new time-saving devices in the studios, as well as an over-rigid application of union rules as to the number of people required to carry out one simple operation.

In his opinion, the future lies in the production of three distinct types of film: (a) those made specifically for TV, using full television production techniques but with motion picture cameras; (b) good entertainment films for the cinema made with more efficient utilisation of stage space and TV methods; and (c) epics in the *Lawrence of Arabia* class. One could delve into this kind of studio debate for many pages and still not arrive at a general agreement. The technicians I have interviewed agree, in general, that things could be speeded up if

* A small faction in the industry favours adoption of the French working hours: 12 noon until 7.30 without breaks. This is likely to prove difficult here because of differences in social habits; we tend to eat earlier and theatres, cinemas and transport shut down earlier than in France.

ALAN BATES IN CLIVE DONNER'S "NOTHING BUT THE BEST".



certain tensions between management and labour could be soothed, but differ in their attitude to television techniques. That it is possible to film at outrageous speed and still produce a *film*, rather than the usual type of cramped second feature which everyone deplores, is demonstrated by a recent Roger Corman production from America called *The Terror*. Corman shot this in three days, with an extra weekend for exteriors; and although the result is basically a rather corny horror movie, it does show that a director with a genuine film sense and an infectious enjoyment of the medium can produce something at top speed which looks quite unlike a TV film or play.

As an outsider looking in, my experience of actual studio methods is insufficient to allow me to make more than a general comment. However, reading the B.K.S. Journal discussions, as well as a letter from the British Film Producers' Association to the Society of Film and Television Arts, drawing attention to "the need for full consultation between key technicians and directors (e.g. cameramen and art directors), at as early a stage in production planning as possible," led me to interview Richard Macdonald, film production designer, artist and advertising art director, who has been doing precisely this for years. Macdonald has worked with Joseph Losey on all his films since *The Sleeping Tiger*, and the fruits of their close collaboration can be clearly seen on the screen. Beginning at the script stage, he produces drawings of characters and scenes and tries to visualise the story's general atmosphere. Great attention is paid in these early stages to photographic requirements—"you must organise a set so that it works for the director." Clarity and a kind of heightened simplicity are Macdonald's aims, and he admits that Losey's predilection for luxuriant, baroque furnishings sometimes leads to friendly arguments. He visits the studio while the sets are being built, confers with the art director and supervises the acquisition of properties, set decorations, etc. (In this respect, he feels that better co-ordination might be obtained if the designer had full control over these factors.)

Like some other directors and technicians I have talked to, Macdonald occasionally suffers pangs of frustration when told that something difficult won't work, when he knows that it will if the problem is squarely tackled. "Although the studio staff will give you ninety per cent of what you require, the missing ten per cent is often the most important part. There is also a kind of studio ritual and routine which can be impeding, and I am against that." Referring to the need to give a film an overall visual styling, he pointed out that "the old concept of replica building is pointless; an artist should 'experience' something into existence rather than assemble it from predictable, well-tried sources. Our method of working means that the director is not a stranger on the set when he starts."

Of course there is no one definite way of making pictures: some British directors have tried a similar form of creative collaboration with their designers in the past, while others see no particular need for pre-planning of this order. In Macdonald's view, however, his kind of collaboration saves time and money in the long run; and these are, understandably, top priorities for the industry spokesmen quoted above.

* * *

Big units or small ones? Freedom on location or discipline in the studio? At an early stage in this investigation, it became obvious that the way films are made must condition the *kind* of films that are made. This led me logically to an enquiry into what subjects and methods are most likely to appeal to British film-makers, in a situation influenced both by the presence

here of American directors and by the recent revolution in production methods on the continent.

The chief problems facing our own independent film-makers seem to be finance, the choice of the right kind of crew (both in size and disposition) and the need to get a fair showing in the cinemas. During all my enquiries, I made a clear distinction between big-budget film-making for the mass market and medium to low-budget art (or personal) cinema, and asked questions mainly on the latter. Budgets, of course, determine methods and should be related to potential earnings: it would be no more efficient to make *Lawrence* on the lines of *Carabinieri* than it would be to make *Carabinieri* on the lines of *Lawrence*. And it seems probable that British directors and technicians are not all that interested in tackling the kind of material which has attracted Olmi, Godard, Wertmüller, Truffaut and the rest (even if the way were open to them), but would prefer to make medium budget films within a more established tradition and to bring to them their own personal quality. Here, the professional attitudes of some American directors can be of immense value: despite the so-called regimentation of Hollywood, so many of them know how to give their work what Losey calls a signature, and have achieved this within a tradition far removed from the European concept of the specialised art film.

The shifting pattern of audience tastes is partly responsible for this change in climate and opportunity. Expensive spectacles and so-called minority films have their faithful followers, whereas the routine, middle-range production loses ground all the time. Films like *The Servant* and *Billy Liar* have

ALBERT FINNEY AND MONA WASHBOURNE IN A SCENE FROM KAREL REIZ'S NEW VERSION OF "NIGHT MUST FALL".





JACK CLAYTON, JAMES MASON AND ANNE BANCROFT ON THE SET OF "THE PUMPKIN EATER".

fared much better at the box-office than some industry pundits expected, and this may conceivably lead companies to think in terms of a semi-minority audience and distributors to feel that more films of this kind could make an impact on an international level. Essentially, this calls for an increase in the number of producers with a flair for seeing how off-beat material can be made to work commercially.

But can this "non-routine" type of film be made quickly and cheaply enough in Britain? Speed is not, of course, necessarily an asset in itself, and there are directors all over the world who achieve outstanding results on the lengthiest of shooting schedules. All the same, if Godard and Truffaut in France, or Buñuel in Mexico, had needed a 15-week schedule, they would probably have had to leave their films unmade. And one can't help feeling that a little more pressure might help at times in British studios, especially as I have heard it suggested that some of the more elaborate schedules tend to bore even the film-makers themselves. It is obviously easier to retain efficiency and stimulus on a schedule lasting, say, only eight weeks; and the studio-based films, in particular, might look just that degree more urgent and alive. One must also take into consideration the fact that many major British directors have been unable to maintain continuity in feature production for a variety of economic and other reasons: there was a four-year gap between the showings of *Our Man in Havana* and *The Running Man* (Reed); three years between *The Innocents* and *The Pumpkin Eater* (Clayton); and four years between *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *Night Must Fall* (Reisz, but with a major production credit in between). With such waits between pictures, directors seem likely to think in more perfectionist terms, which in turn could mean longer schedules, than if they were making movies at the rate of one a year.

If one accepts the hard economic facts governing British production at the moment, what are the prime requirements for the kind of personal film-making we have in mind? For James Clark, the keynote was enthusiasm and the choice of the right people.* "The man raising the money has to be enthusiastic and really want to make the film: he should know his crew as friends, the director should be as good and dedicated as they are and, if necessary, they should be prepared to work on smaller salaries. Resnais, for instance, creates an

atmosphere around him and thus his crew become drawn into his mood—not necessarily *understanding* what they are doing but believing strongly in it. He works, as a rule, with a regular crew, and most of them belong to the same generation, which is important too." Clark felt it should be possible to make equally individual, though different, films here with a crew of about twenty; and although this figure was disputed by some of my other informants, it is still large by comparison with certain continental units (*see answers to questionnaire elsewhere*).

Clive Donner, a young director who has maintained continuity of production over the past few years, agreed on the need for enthusiasm and added that "you should cast your crew as carefully as you cast your players." He also felt fairly optimistic about the future and the possibility of making films of his choice. "I believe other people could successfully adopt the methods we used to do *The Caretaker*. One further development I would like to try is to involve the distributor financially as an investor, but not in a way that would impair artistic freedom. And in the present state of things it is essential to have a distributor with obvious exhibition outlets." Since *The Caretaker* he has made *Nothing But the Best*—shot in eight weeks, six on location and two in the studio, with the slightly larger crew required by a more mobile subject. "I prefer to work on location, but there were some scenes in this film which could only be done successfully in the studio. In my case, I feel that studios, with their bare walls and familiar doors and signs, tend to destroy atmosphere and concentration."

Donner agreed that some personnel are slow in taking advantage of TV innovations like neck microphones and flexible lighting equipment (which he likes to use himself when possible), but tended to discount any idea that the tempo of British film-making is generally slower than in the U.S. "For one thing, the working day is longer in America. My crews and I work exceptionally fast; but, mind you, it is important to establish the right kind of atmosphere not only on the first day the director sets foot on the set, as you say, but every day."

* * *

So far, I have presented viewpoints on the way British directors might tackle the problems of getting their pictures made more efficiently and to their liking. But films are not produced in a vacuum and, as I mentioned earlier, the changing pattern of production throughout the world has to be taken into account. In this respect, it must be admitted that a good deal of contemporary British production still looks rather old-fashioned in terms of the actual images on the screen. Good though our cameramen are, we have not yet produced technical innovators of the calibre of Raoul Coutard or of Gianni Di Venanzo, to whose distinctive lighting style films as varied as Fellini's *8½* and the debutante director Lina Wertmüller's *I Basilischi* owe so much. A mark of these cameramen would seem to be their extreme adaptability. Several of our own cameramen and other technicians have worked along these lines, especially on location, yet the degree of self-expression and improvised invention possible within the confines of a large and sometimes unwieldy unit seems to be limited, according to the answers I received on this point. And, of course, small units and high-speed shooting go together, while the results still look good.

I have also been told that the modern brand of so-called "rough" shooting would not find favour among more traditionally-minded technicians. Yet, surely, if today's cinema looks different from that of twenty or thirty years ago, this is partly due to new conceptions in the use of the camera. It may be true that some of the new men would not take kindly to lighting great shimmering close-ups *à la* Ruttenberg or Folsey (who, let it be said, remain masters of their period); but today's young directors usually don't want them to. The danger here is that some directors and technicians have tended to exploit hand-held camera and bleak lighting effects simply

* While working in Paris with Stanley Donen, Clark had a student from IDHEC as one of his assistants. These apprentices, or *stagiers*, are required to work on three features on the floor before qualifying as a second assistant director. Their salary is around £8 a week, but many work for the love of it and are usually mad about films. (When are we going to have an officially recognised Film School in this country?)

because they are fashionable in foreign parts, without realising that they only work when incorporated into a personal style. *Dr. Strangelove*, for example, bears the visual imprint of Kubrick's American films, obtained in this case with the aid of British technicians. And here the style is entirely at the service of the narrative.

Kubrick's way in achieving these results would seem to accord with the dearest wishes of all those I have questioned on the problem of director-crew relationships. Anthony Harvey, who edited *Dr. Strangelove*, continually stressed how stimulating it was to work with someone who took such a meticulous interest in every aspect of the production—"and I am sure this applies to Gilbert Taylor, the lighting cameraman, and the rest of the unit. I learned more about film-making in general and editing in particular at this time than ever before." Harvey mentioned Kubrick's unusually close rapport with the actors: "he was always conferring with them and having little private rehearsals while waiting for the next set-up." When I singled out the film's remarkable close-ups, Harvey stressed that, next to acting, the photography was Kubrick's main concern. "Having been a still photographer himself, he has a special eye. He and Taylor tried several unusual methods to achieve the kind of quality you mention, and we all took enormous time and trouble to get the final bomb run exactly right." Harvey's answer to my request for a summing-up of his attitude to Kubrick in the light of his previous experience was: "Of course, he has a deep concern about the subject, and if you work like Kubrick you *can* get this very personal stamp on a film. There are many other directors who do good work and evolve a personal method, but without achieving this kind of style."

* * *

During this investigation, I have tried to bring to the surface some of the relevant problems affecting the British studios today. I have asked a lot of awkward questions and my thanks are due to all those who gave such frank and detailed replies. If a summing up is necessary, it had better be an entirely personal one, so here it is. The difficulties facing those wishing to make good, intelligent and commercially valid films in this country stem from economic instabilities (and, for independents particularly, the uncertainty of

exhibition outlets) on the one hand, and, on occasion, a lack of passion and real creative involvement on the part of those at the top and bottom of the production spiral. No one would suggest that all films made here suffer from these handicaps. Yet it can scarcely be denied that the film temperature here is still comparatively low (and this applies to audiences as well as creators), compared with France and Italy, where the film now has a firm cultural status and where artists who switch from the novel to the theatre and cinema and back again are no longer a rarity but are judged simply as creators using the tools which most logically suit the work on hand.

British film-makers, by comparison, seem too inward-looking, too detached from developments in the outside world. My experiences at European festivals suggest that foreign directors and critics often possess more knowledge of the British cinema than our film-makers have of theirs. The British Film Academy Awards in recent years have indicated that its members feel there is little of major interest outside the solid successes of the English-speaking cinema; and apart from a faithful handful of regulars, it is worth noting how few British film people bother to take the chance to catch up offered by the London Festival. Busy film-makers, all over the world, inevitably have less time to see other people's work than the average critic. But I suspect that abroad rather more of them are prepared to make the effort than is the case here.

Someone once said that the British cinema thrives on crises. By the time this article appears we shall probably know the outcome of the present one; and whatever happens, producers will doubtless continue the struggle to set up productions, and young men will continue to call at the B.F.I. asking how they can get a job in a studio. This report certainly indicates that there is no shortage of ideas in the studios; and the industrial problems on which so much attention has been focused during the past few months, as well as the possibility of automation lurking just around the corner, suggest that now is a moment for reassessment. It will be a major tragedy if these forward impulses are to be continually frustrated by a combination of governmental disinterest, industrial rigidity, and the old English unwillingness to recognise that responsible artists have a part to play in society, even in a film studio.

AFTER THE BALL: ROGER CORMAN'S "MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH".



10

9

Ten questions to nine directors

INTRODUCTION

The recent crisis in the British film industry centred on the question of independence. How could the independents show their films? How could their right to make them be protected? Independence means different things to different film-makers, but undoubtedly independence of mind counts for as much as independence of the circuits; and despite all the risks and problems which beset both small producers and big companies, here and abroad, the independently-minded films somehow contrive to get made—and made in increasing numbers.

We have asked a number of film-makers, all of whom might be considered independent-minded, some questions about how they have done it. They range from Stanley Kubrick, whose *Dr. Strangelove* is no less remarkable because it had a big company and a two million dollar budget behind it, to Paule Delsol, whose *La Dérive* was runner-up for the Prix Louis Delluc, and who made the film without backing of any sort. Budgets vary, as do the size of units and the methods of financing. There is no one answer, no hard and fast conclusion to be drawn: these are simply some of the facts. We would like to thank the directors who answered our questions—in the hope, as we put it to them, that their answers might possibly serve *pour encourager les autres*.

THE QUESTIONS:

- 1 Was the original idea of the film your own, or were you commissioned to make it?
- 2 Assuming that the idea was your own, roughly how long did it take you to obtain financial backing and after that to begin work on the film?
- 3 Assuming, again, that the idea originated with you, did you show a producer or production financier (a) a shooting script; or (b) a treatment? Were there any significant modifications of your original project?
- 4 Was the film financed by (a) a single company; (b) a group of companies; (c) to any extent by private individuals?
- 5 Did you receive any form of state aid, in the form either of money loaned before shooting began, or of a *prime à la qualité* or any similar award after the film was completed?
- 6 Had an assurance of distribution been obtained before the film went into production?
- 7 How long did it take to shoot the film, and approximately how large was the technical crew?
- 8 What, roughly, was the production cost?
- 9 How long after the completion of the film was it before it obtained a public screening, or general distribution? Was it shown at a festival, and do you consider a festival screening (irrespective of whether the film wins a prize) a help either in getting distribution in your own country, or in reaching a world market?
- 10 Have you started work yet on another film; and if so is the production set-up similar or organised on different lines?

THE ANSWERS:



STANLEY KUBRICK AND PETER SELLERS

STANLEY KUBRICK

Dr.STRANGELOVE

1. My own idea.
2. I always do the script and then get backing. It took about one month.
3. and 4. Financed by the distributor (Columbia). There were no modifications.
5. No.
6. Yes.
7. Fifteen weeks shooting schedule. A sixty man crew, varying up and down.
8. \$2,000,000 (about £710,000).
9. —
10. Thinking about another film.

JEAN-LUC GODARD

LES CARABINIERS

1. My own idea.
2. Four months to obtain financial backing; then two weeks before beginning work.
3. A treatment. There were no modifications.
4. Financed by a group of companies.

5. No.
6. Yes.
7. Three weeks to shoot the film, with a technical crew of twelve people.
8. \$104,000 (about £37,000).
9. The film obtained a public screening two months after completion. It was shown at the Montreal and London festivals, and I think a festival screening helpful in both home and foreign markets.
10. Yes; with a different production set-up.

ERMANNO OLMI

I FIDANZATI

1. The idea was my own.
My contract with Goffredo Lombardo, the president of Titanus, allowed me maximum freedom.
2. From the completion of the contract until the beginning of work on the film was only twenty days.
3. In ten minutes conversation I explained to Lombardo the idea of the film.
4. From two companies: Titanus and The 22 December, which is the Milan production organisation of which I am a part.
5. Only the normal returns on investment provided for by Italian film legislation.
6. Yes; Titanus is also a distribution company.
7. I shot the film in six weeks, four weeks in Sicily and two in Milan, with a fortnight's break between the two periods of shooting. I had a crew of eight working with me, increased to ten only for the more difficult scenes.
8. Eighty million lire (about £45,000).
9. The film had its first public screening two months after completion. *I Fidanzati* was shown at the Cannes Festival,

ERMANNO OLMI



where it won the prize of the O.C.I.C. The festival showing has been no particular advantage as far as the Italian market is concerned, but is definitely useful for overseas sales.

10. I have written a script.

The changing situation of the Italian cinema imposes its own solution to production problems. There are two alternatives: either to cut the cost to a positively ludicrous level, or to try to acquire for the film a popular dimension on a high level.



LINA WERTMULLER

LINA WERTMULLER

I BASILISCHI

1. The idea of the film was my own.
2. Two months.
3. I showed the producer first an outline and then, at a later stage, a treatment. There were no alterations to my original project.
4. *I Basilischi* was financed by two companies.
5. I received no state aid, and to date no *prime à la qualité*.
6. I had not obtained any guarantee of distribution before the film went into production.
7. It took me seven weeks to shoot the film, with a technical crew of fifteen people.
8. The production cost was approximately 50 million lire (about £28,000). Of this, 35 million went in shooting the film, and the other 15 million in the expenses of dubbing and printing copies, etc.
9. The film went into general distribution two months after it was completed. I think that the showing of a film at the festivals is undoubtedly a help, both for the home and foreign markets.

10. Yes, I've begun work on another film. I don't yet know how the production will be organised.

CLIVE DONNER

THE CARETAKER

1. The idea to make *The Caretaker* was our own. (That is: Donald Pleasence, Robert Shaw, Alan Bates, Harold Pinter, Michael Birkett and Clive Donner.)
2. The capitalisation took four months.
3. Offers of finance which required any modification of the shooting script or any restrictions on creative control we regarded as being cheeky. The only firm offer of capital by a British film financier which was offered at first asking without requiring modifications to the shooting script, was by the N.F.F.C. As their charter states that there must be a reasonable chance of commercial distribution, N.F.F.C. interpret this as meaning a sizeable financial investment from a distributor, so we couldn't accept their offer.
4. We were historically the first British feature film capitalised to the full extent by private individuals alone.
5. There is, alas, no *prime à la qualité* or similar award available after the completion of a film in this country.
6. There was no assured distribution given before or during shooting. Nor, until we were ready to seek it, after shooting was done.
7. The film was shot in five weeks. The crew I wanted had no wasteful excess of manpower; nor was I hampered by the lack of it. The crew exceeded the minimum requirements so union considerations were not significant.
8. £30,000.
9. The film will open at the Academy Cinema one year after

THE CARETAKER UNIT



the completion of shooting, and opened at the Guild Cinema in New York in mid-January, 1964. It had, however, already been shown publicly in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Its success at the Edinburgh Festival was exploited by Scottish cinema men, and increased their chances of a success with a wider audience. The award of a Silver Bear at the Berlin Festival brought international publicity; and offers of international distribution.

10. I have since made another film, *Nothing But the Best*, capitalised by conventional methods and with the distribution arrangements assured. Before *The Caretaker* such a form of promotion would have seemed the only possible one.

I hope to make films again following *The Caretaker's* capitalisation and production pattern. I do not think it is necessary to choose a subject as physically restricted and with so economical a cast. Nor should I expect the creative investors not to receive any livelihood from the cost of the production during the making of it.

We have produced a film artistically to our tastes which is commercially acceptable to distributors and cinema owners. We must continue to make films in this way. But apart from showing them, cinemas can try to understand their audience (and that audience who doesn't come). And by recognising, exploiting and encouraging them to come, we and other people stand a chance not only to make films and have them shown, but also to recoup our investments.

JOSEPH STRICK

THE BALCONY

1. It was my notion to make a film of *The Balcony*; financing would have been impossible had the play not been very successful in New York.
2. Financing depended on a finished screenplay and casting commitments; this took almost a year.
3. I tried raising money at each stage of the project: at the acquisition of the rights, at the completion of the treatment, then the screenplay, then the casting. All the money was in the bank about a week after we began shooting.
4. We got the money from an American art cinema distributor and a private investor. We had neither subsidies
5. nor interference.
6. We shot for six weeks using a crew of 22 technicians, half of whom were redundant.
7. \$165,000 (about £59,000).
8. We opened in New York two months after completion; in London six months later. We showed at two festivals: Edinburgh and London. In my opinion festivals are tremendously important; they give a free forum to the film-maker whose work is not understood by the money-changers, and they help break down our insularity by confronting the public and conscientious critics with works from all over the world. An ancillary benefit is the prize system: with the proliferation, no director need go without a plaque.

10. It seems to me there are three general patterns in which feature films can be made:

(a) Subsistence level: no one gets paid. The inescapable costs amount to approximately \$20,000 for film, processing, camera rental, sound mixing and so on. The film will be as good as the talent of the people involved.

(b) "Scale" level: everyone gets paid at the minimum rates provided in the union contracts. *The Balcony* was made in this way with the cast and crew participating in the profits.

(c) "Industry" level: everyone gets paid as much as they can grab since they probably have no real faith in the film and they want to get theirs before the critics and the public finish it off. Everyone pretends "excitement" in the project and after the fact exhibits a great indifference.

As long as I am able to, I will work in pattern (b), but if it should become necessary, would revert again to (a). It is my conviction that more subsistence film-making and less of the industry variety will yield a far more interesting cinema art.



PAULE DELSOL (RIGHT)

PAULE DELSOL

LA DERIVE

I WROTE THE SCENARIO FOR my film *La Dérive* (*Drifting*) in 1960. This was not a commissioned job. Having always been interested in psychology, I wanted to draw this portrait of a young girl of our times with the greatest possible precision. Having already written two novels, I felt that I knew how to control characters; and as I had some experience of short film work, I felt that I was technically capable of making a film.

I worked alone on the scenario and shooting script, which I then submitted to François Truffaut. He didn't like the

château scene as I had written it, and I followed his advice and rewrote it completely.

Being almost unknown in film circles, I was unable to call on any financial backing. I began the film by putting my own savings into it, and was able to finish it thanks to an inheritance. Consequently *La Dérive* was entirely financed by me personally. I had no form of government aid; nor did I have a distributor.

I was, however, able to carry out the project thanks to the collaboration of my husband, Jean Malige, an experienced camera operator, who was responsible for the camerawork and the sound recording, which was done in our sound studio here in Montpellier. We have, in effect, set up our own sound studio, projection room and cutting room, which has enabled us since 1955 to do short film work in the best possible conditions.

The film was entirely shot in the country, near Montpellier in the South of France. The actual shooting period was two months, working as and when our finances allowed over a total period of a year and a half.

Our unit was extremely limited: 3 people on the camera; 2 stage hands, an electrician and a production manager. Having neither a continuity girl nor a make-up expert, I took on these two jobs myself, and I had an assistant director for only a fortnight's shooting.

La Dérive has not yet been shown to the public, though my distributor expects to bring it out in March. It was selected for screening at the Montreal Festival, but it was unfortunately too late to get a censorship visa before the festival date. The fact of a festival showing is obviously a help to a film.

I plan to begin another film in October, producing it jointly with a firm which will be concerned with the whole administrative side of the production.

ROGER CORMAN

THE STRANGER

BEFORE MAKING *THE INTRUDER* (released in England under the title *The Stranger*) I had never failed to receive financing for the production of any script I had developed. Therefore, it never occurred to me that after my successes with commercial films I'd have any trouble securing financing for this, my first serious effort. I hoped to gain major financing and distribution on the basis of the completed script, with the safeguard in the back of my mind that even if the majors turned me down for a high budget picture my usual sources of capital would finance me on a low budget. Without going into the details, after four months work on the script and another six months trying to finance it, I had been turned down by every possible source of money and was left with a dead project. Only one or two people I went to turned me down because of the controversial elements of the negro-white relationships. Most simply felt that it was not a commercial subject. The only possible way left to make the picture was to put up the money myself. I had done very well commercially with a series of pictures based upon the stories of Edgar Allan Poe, and I simply took my share of the profits from the Poe pictures and used it to make *The Intruder*.

I shot the picture in three weeks on location in Charleston, Missouri, with a crew of fourteen and a cast of five professional actors. The rest of the cast and a few additional members of the crew were recruited from the townspeople. The final cost of the picture was a little over \$100,000 (about £36,000).

The story of the film's distribution is basically one of a great deal of critical acclaim and very little money made at the box-office. It was invited to the Venice Festival where it was well received, but because of some confusion on the part of my distributors I was not made aware of the invitation and was therefore unable to capitalise upon it. The festival showing did help though, because a number of European distributors saw it there, which led to a number of sales of the picture. The pattern seems to be that the film gets good reviews wherever it opens, does good business in art or specialised theatres, but is less successful in regular theatres. Because of the low cost, however, it appears that I'll earn my investment back and maybe even make a small profit.

Despite the rather modest success of *The Intruder*, I'm happy that I made it and definitely intend to make more films of a serious nature, but hopefully on a better financial basis. My most recent pictures have been back in a commercial vein, but I'm working on a picture now that will investigate certain aspects of contemporary life in Texas, a subject that will I believe be of some significance.

JOSEPH LOSEY

THE SERVANT

WHEN ROBIN MAUGHAM'S SHORT NOVEL *The Servant* was first called to my attention in 1956, I immediately took it to Dirk Bogarde; he, while interested in the material, was not prepared to go ahead at that time—a wise and good decision: neither he, I, nor the times were ready for it. Certainly we could not then have made the film we finally made.

Some years later Michael Anderson, with the backing of ABPC I believe, bought the Robin Maugham novel and commissioned Harold Pinter to do a screenplay (his first). After many attempts, Michael Anderson was unable to mount the film owing to prejudices of distributors, agents and other commercial interests (opinions or lack of opinions) and inability to cast the leading role because of the transmission of their fears to actors.

In the summer of 1962 I wrote to Robin Maugham and got a copy of the Pinter screenplay as it then existed. This I sent to Dirk. We were both greatly interested and excited by it, although the screenplay of the film as it reached the screen was only partially to be found in the manuscript which we read at that time. However, it was this first manuscript which we eventually set up.

As briefly and as factually as possible, the process was as follows: first I enlisted the assistance as co-producer of Norman Priggen, with whose help a budget considerably lower than any that had been presented for the project up to that time was achieved. There was no possibility of financing the undertaking unless we could budget at a figure not exceeding £150,000. Norman Priggen was able to get the budget down to £141,000. At that price Leslie Grade through Elstree Distributors (which consists of a combination of the

forces of the Grade Organisation and ABPC) came in for the usual distributor's 70% of the finance. The balance of the financing was provided by the NFFC, plus deferments from Harold Pinter, Dirk Bogarde, Norman Priggen and myself. The project had no difficulty in securing a completion guarantee and apparently the combination of Pinter, Maugham, Bogarde, Sarah Miles, Norman Priggen and Losey, at the figure of £141,000, was sufficient to overcome various misgivings about the subject and the reputation for unconventionality of some of us in that combination. Even then the financing was in doubt up to a very few days before we began rehearsals, and I question very much if it would ever have been possible to make *The Servant* excepting for the consistent interest, loyalty and drive of all on the team, supplemented by the constant help and confidence (once it was given) of Leslie Grade and Robin Fox. (And, I might add, the intelligent co-operation of the censor, Mr. Trevelyan.)

Once the project was definite, extensive new writing and re-writing of the script began. The last one-fifth of our picture *The Servant* (with the exception of some of the details of the last sequence) is substantially as originally written by Pinter. It is this fifth, I think, which most disturbed those who were going to be disturbed and most excited me and those others who were going to be excited.

The film, of course, qualified as a quota picture and therefore for Eady Plan benefits. Through our company's contract with Elstree Distributors we had assurance of distribution with ABPC, but certainly no guarantee as to dates or quality of bookings. The film required very careful handling after completion to ensure the way in which it would eventually be distributed and its launching in the West End. This pre-distribution campaign of ours included entry and screening at the Venice Festival and the First New York Film Festival. (The film was withheld from the London Festival by ABPC, although the Festival asked for it; I thought and continue to think this a mistaken decision.) There is no doubt in my mind but that the Festival screenings plus the various private screenings we held created an interest in the picture by word of mouth, as well as resulting in some special newspaper reports which not only generated a special atmosphere for its release, but also influenced the tone of advertising and exploitation. Essential to the success of such films as *The Servant* is individual and imaginative handling, which the large circuits and distributors are often not sufficiently flexible to accommodate. (The makers of the film collaborated on posters, synopses, trailer, press campaign ideas—such as Cinema Club showings and discussions.) Unless a picture reaches its proper audience it cannot succeed commercially. In my opinion audiences are usually far ahead of the businessmen in the film industry, provided the audiences are given the opportunity to know a little about the film they are going to see. If a film is "sold" as something which it is *not*, it may well never reach its proper audience and the audience which does see it may reject it with justified violence. Certainly screenings organised by our production group affected the world interest in the picture.

I think we can take particular pride in the fact that the picture was made not only *within* the budget, but somewhat *under* budget. The shooting schedule was seven weeks and the actual shooting was pretty close to seven weeks, although the effective days of shooting cannot be exactly determined because of an interruption of shooting owing to my being taken ill with pneumonia. It is only fair to say that insurance covered this situation which otherwise would have been a catastrophe, but as anyone familiar with such matters will



HAZEL TERRY, JAMES FOX AND JOSEPH LOSEY.

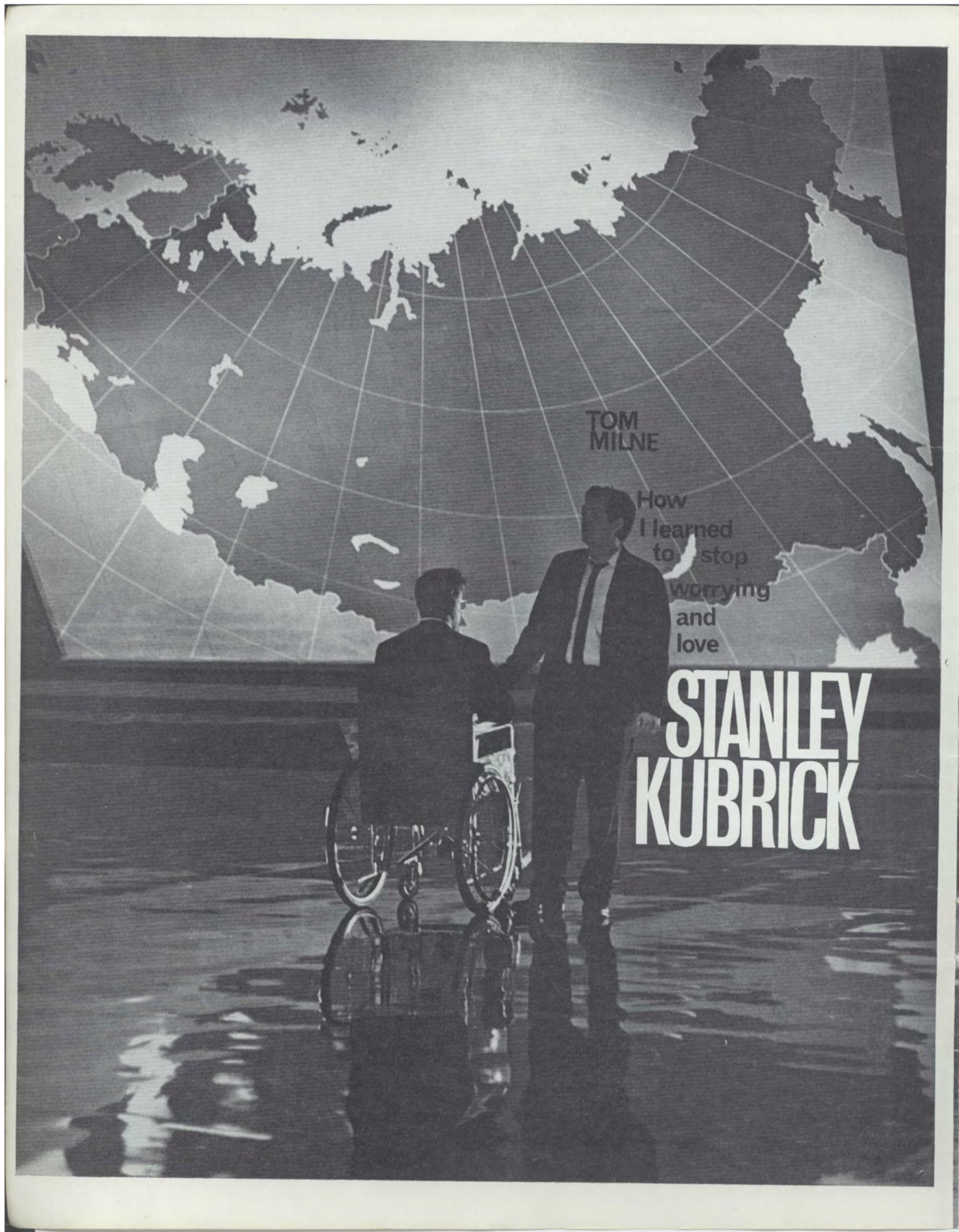
know, insurance never really quite covers the actual losses. (The film was prepared for four weeks and rehearsed for one.)

It is the unconventional pictures, the "new" pictures, very often the same pictures which have been rejected as projects for years, which time and time again "rescue" the industry. It is a cliché by now to point out that the film "industry" as industry constantly rejects one year what it is crying to have repeated the next year. And like all big babies, it never seems to learn. But in spite of everything, the medium and its real creators do survive. Distribution and marketing patterns are changing in ways which should eventually make the artist's work a little easier. But *when* will this actually come about? Just at the moment the time looks a very long way off.

You ask me if I have started on another film. The answer is no, in spite of the fact that it is more than eight months since *The Servant* was finished. (It was more than six months after completion before the film had other than festival showings.)

The Servant is making money. It broke records at Warners, Leicester Square. The so-called "pre-release" figures are full of surprises, good and bad. Meanwhile, so far as we who made *The Servant* are concerned, it is still "wait and see". The film was made without interference, but few "commercial" film people believed in it when it was finished. It went to the festivals, but "Wait and see if it will get a West End release." It went to Warners, Leicester Square, but "Wait and see if it will do any business." It broke records at Warners, but "Wait and see if it will do business in the provinces." It was well reviewed in many of the provincial cities on the occasion of pre-release dates and business is generally way above average and sometimes startlingly so—but "Wait and see if it *really* makes money . . ."

Every film of this sort has its own particular battle to fight and each battle won gains a little for everybody else. I am still waiting for the day when someone will ask "What do *you* want to do next?" and then says "okay—do it."

A black and white photograph featuring Stanley Kubrick in a wheelchair and Tom Milne standing in front of a large world map. The map is a stylized, high-contrast representation of the world's continents and oceans, with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The scene is set in a room with a reflective floor that shows the silhouettes of the two men. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

TOM
MILNE

How
I learned
to stop
worrying
and
love

**STANLEY
KUBRICK**

SOME DIRECTORS POSSESS an instantly recognisable signature; others, merely a consistency of style and treatment; but the worrying thing about Stanley Kubrick was the way he once made excellent films which seemed to reveal so little of their director's personality that they might almost have come out of a vacuum. While admiring *The Killing* and, even more, *Paths of Glory*, one couldn't help wondering whether Kubrick might not turn out after all as simply a brilliant packager of artistically viable merchandise, giving the turn of the screw of his clever talent to the production of something several shades more incisive, but no more personal, than the gangster films or anti-war films which were in the commercial air.

Paths of Glory was, in a sense, a logical follow-up to *The Killing*, but *Lolita*? Announced as it was amid the chomping scandal so unnecessarily aroused by the publication of Nabokov's novel, one couldn't help having doubts about the project. "How did they ever make a film of *Lolita*?" asked the advertisements; and privately one echoed, what would Kubrick make of it, and what, in particular, attracted him to the subject? Looking back after *Lolita*, however (the film which, capped by *Dr. Strangelove*, finally removed any reservations about Kubrick as a director), the pattern of Kubrick's personality and its development emerged quite clearly.

Anyone on the lookout could have been signposted by an interview which appeared in *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1957, in which Kubrick mentioned, as his two favourite directors, Ophuls and Bergman. The interviewer was more concerned to coax a reluctant Kubrick into talking about Kazan, Aldrich or Fellini, and nothing more was said, but the implication is obvious: Ophuls for his elegance and style, Bergman for his persistent attempts to unravel an obsession or choreograph a dilemma. Kubrick, starting life as a magazine photographer, has always composed his images with detailed care, and his first feature, *Fear and Desire* (1953), was praised above all for its brilliant visual flair. What has been less readily remarked is that his films tend, like Bergman's, to follow a characteristic pattern.

Most reviewers complained of *Lolita*, for instance, that it was too cold and calculating, that it completely missed the eroticism of Nabokov's novel. While true enough, this is irrelevant as criticism, because what Kubrick was after was not an evocation of Humbert's sensuous joy in his nymphet, but of his obsessive fear of what his tabooed love will bring. Nabokov's *Lolita* begins with Humbert's bitter-sweet recollection, his story already over, of his past joy and pain: "Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth. Lo. Lee. Ta." Kubrick's *Lolita* begins with the end itself, the brutal act of murder which is the inevitable outcome of Humbert's sense of guilt. And whereas the novel is in effect an epic poem on the love of Humbert and Lolita in which the ambiguous Quilty, who swells into an avenging Fury in Humbert's mind, appears only halfway through, in the film Quilty is an immediate, tangible presence throughout, teasing and terrifying Humbert into destroying him.

It is thus the nature of the obsession and its consequences which interest Kubrick; and each of his films charts an obsession—or, more precisely, charts an action in which a fatal flaw in human nature or in society brings disaster. In *Killer's Kiss* (1955),* a young boxer falls in love, and because his girl is involved with a lecherous crook, becomes enmeshed in a round of violence and murder. In *The Killing* (1956), five

men in desperate need of money plan a perfect robbery, and end in a maze of betrayals and killings. In *Paths of Glory* (1957), three soldiers involved in an impossible attack, initiated because a general's reputation is at stake, find themselves arbitrarily selected as scapegoats and shot for cowardice. In *Spartacus* (1959-60), the hero instigates a slave rebellion against Rome, the ranks close against him and he ends up crucified, his revolt a total failure. In *Lolita* (1961), Humbert Humbert indulges his forbidden love for his twelve-year-old stepdaughter, is caught up in a fantasy of retribution, and brings about his own doom by shooting his ambiguous pursuer. And in *Dr. Strangelove* (1963), of course, "a single slip-up" brings the end of the world.

If each of the films ends in defeat, it is not so much because Kubrick is cynical or pessimistic, as because the mechanism of human nature, operating within the structure of society, creates a vicious circle which can permit no other solution. If *Spartacus*, or Colonel Dax (in *Paths of Glory*), tries to right an injustice from the noblest of motives, then society in the shape of Roman senators and slave merchants, or the military hierarchy, will have to stifle the impulse in order to preserve its *status quo*; if Humbert Humbert loves a minor then, even though she technically seduced him, and even though he was not even her first lover, society must label him a criminal, a corrupter of youth; if a young boxer (*Killer's Kiss*) braves the underworld to rescue his girl, he will spark off a recoil of violence likely to strain her courage and make her betray him; if mutual trust and co-operation is required to carry out a plan, then conflicting interests and suspicion will wreck it (*The Killing*).

A case could be made that three of the films—*Killer's Kiss*, *Paths of Glory* and *Spartacus*—in fact end on an upbeat note, but this does not alter the basic argument. Both *Killer's Kiss* (a general post in which the boxer is found not guilty of murder and his repentant girl joins him on his homebound train) and *Spartacus* (with Spartacus dying on the cross, and his wife holding up their baby son, newly freed from slavery, for him to see before they drive away over the horizon) have obviously arbitrary happy endings tacked on which run contrary to the movement of the films. More complex is the last sequence of *Paths of Glory*, in the men's canteen immediately after the execution: a pathetically tearful German girl is hustled on to the stage; as she haltingly sings a sentimental ballad, jeers and whistles give way to rapt attention, and the camera picks out face after bearded, battle-weary face, glistening with furtive tears. The sergeant tells Dax, who is watching the scene, that the men have been ordered back to the trenches, and Dax non-committally replies, "Give the men a few minutes more, Sergeant." This scene has been interpreted as signifying that Dax has had his faith in human nature restored. In fact, it is surely one of the bitterest in Kubrick's work, as its sentimental aura—so rare in Kubrick—should indicate. The *status quo* has been preserved. Men who have just witnessed without protest a monstrous miscarriage of justice are moved to tears by a frightened, homesick girl; but they are left untouched and uncomprehending by the mechanics of expediency which have just been exposed, and which cause war, which caused the execution of the three soldiers, and even the misery of the German girl.

* I have not seen his first feature, *Fear and Desire* (1953), which was never released in Britain and which Kubrick prefers to forget. From its synopsis—four soldiers trapped behind the enemy lines, fighting on the battleground of their consciences—it seems to follow the pattern; certainly *One-Eyed Jacks*, the film begun by Kubrick and eventually directed by Brando, does.

Life, in Kubrick's films, is a dilemma in which people are trapped by the mechanics of expediency—their own, other people's, or society's. The trap is set at the beginning of each film, and as we watch the mouse making his pitiful, obstinate attempts to steal the cheese before the steel closes in on him, we know that by the end the trap *will* be sprung. Although there is no point in pushing the comparison very far, it is perhaps worth noting the similarity of approach in Sophoclean tragedy, where malign Fate inexorably prevents the hero from escaping or attaining his goal; where a point of crisis is dramatised, and all action is pared down and deployed so as to illuminate the scope and significance of that crisis.

* * *

Paradoxically, Kubrick's method is shown most clearly by its failure to work in *Spartacus*. The film opens with slaves toiling on a mountainside under the burning sun, Spartacus trying to help a stumbling comrade, and being pegged out to die of thirst by the guards as a punishment. Meanwhile, the commentary—a favourite Kubrick device to alert the audience as to the nature of the trap—sketches in the history of Spartacus' rebellion against slavery and its end in failure. The first half of the film is brilliant: Batiatus buying slaves to train as gladiators, selecting them like animals for their good points; the harsh discipline and routine of the gladiators' school; the realisation by the gladiators that they must now kill friends or be killed; the special fight-to-the-death arranged as a pleasant diversion for four bored Roman patricians; the Negro slave's unexpected refusal to break the bond of brotherhood by killing Spartacus; the final open revolt and escape of the slaves. Up to this point, the film has a herringbone construction: the spine is Spartacus' will to rebellion, and everything else, even his love for the slave-girl Varinia, leads directly to or from it. The film's subsequent failure is due less to the statutory blockbuster wishy-washiness of its love scenes and prolongation of its battles, than to the fact

that its spine is broken and the film divides into two separate halves—the involved struggle for power in the Roman senate, and the growing comradeship among the slave army—both of which lose sight of Spartacus' "will to rebellion". The film comes to a dead halt, because one has to make a conscious effort to recall that it was Spartacus who caused the trouble in the senate, or that his slave army, indulging in sing-songs, having babies, swimming in the nude, fraternising joyfully and dreaming wistfully of their far-off homes, is actually fighting to make Spartacus' dream a reality.

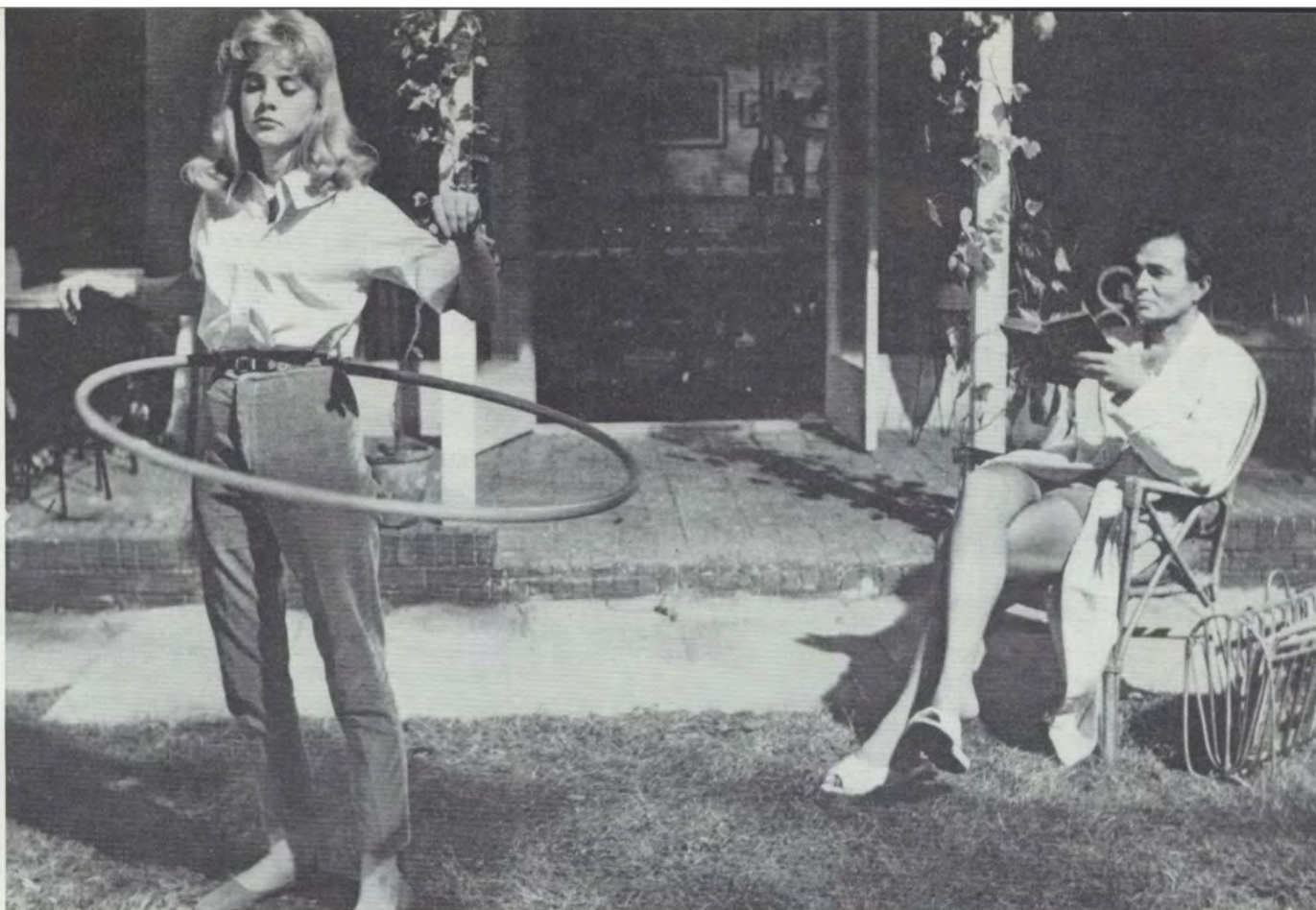
In *Paths of Glory*, on the other hand, the spine is as strong and unbending as a military back; and, as the opening sequence indicates, the central line is not the fate of the three soldiers, but the patterns of power woven round it. A squad of soldiers comes to attention outside the entrance to a château which serves as military HQ; a car drives up, a general gets out, salutes; cut into an elegant salon where General Broulard is telling his Divisional Commander, Mireau, that his men must attack an impregnable German position. Mireau's initial "Out of the question," and final "We just might do it," are linked by Broulard's casual hint that success might mean promotion. An equation is chalked up as a basis for the action, every subsequent scene springs from it, and no amount of twisting or turning can get away from it, though it produces unforeseen variations: unsuccessful attack equals no promotion; no promotion equals shifting the blame; shifting the blame equals picking a scapegoat; picking a scapegoat equals laying oneself open to blame; laying oneself open to blame equals someone else's promotion. (*Dr. Strangelove* has a similar equational basis: Accident + Nuclear Weapons = Annihilation.)

Kubrick has often been called a cold director, but his purpose in *Paths of Glory* is not to make one weep for the three innocent puppets who are shot. In the condemned cell scenes, for instance, there is an almost Buñuelian avoidance of sentimental identification in the varying levels of hysteria in the three prisoners, in the pious platitudes of the priest, in the struggle which breaks out between the priest and one of the men; and above all in the preparation for execution of the prisoner with the fractured skull ("Pinch his cheeks a couple of times . . . it may make him open his eyes"), and the sudden squashing of the cockroach ("Now you got the edge on him") which Corporal Arnaud has just sadly remarked will be alive when they are dead tomorrow—the first mature examples of the *humour noir* which flowered in *Lolita* and *Strangelove*. Instead of tears, Kubrick wants his audience to break out in a cold sweat at the intricate, ruthless manipulations which make the three men's deaths inescapable. Throughout, therefore, he has adopted an almost mathematical style, fairly obviously though effectively in his use of contrasts (cutting from the elegance of the château to the mud and smoke of the trenches), and more subtly in his overall style. *Paths of Glory* is above all a film of tracking shots, long, calm shots drawing inexorable parallel lines from which there is no deviation: along the trenches as Dax inspects his troops before the attack, walking past rows of exhausted, apprehensive men, while the smoke grows thicker and the bombardment becomes almost continuous; laterally following the sweeping lines advancing in attack, and recording the simple fact that a lot of men are dying; the steady progress towards the three stakes awaiting the condemned.

The danger, of course, lies in a possible slackening of tempo, a possible aura of lazy elegance. In the dialogue scenes, however, apart from one or two flourishes like the



"SPARTACUS": THE SLAVE GLADIATORS.



"LOLITA": SUE LYON AND JAMES MASON.

ironical pan down from a grandiose painting to watch the prisoners as they are marched into a solemnly echoing salon for their mockery of a court martial, Kubrick is perfectly content to let his camera stay still while the actors make their points. In between times the editing (supervised, as always, by Kubrick himself) stretches the action as tight as it can go, dispensing largely with dissolves and fades in favour of the direct cut, and creating a dynamic overall rhythm in which each scene spills its mood and tempo over into the next. In the court martial scene, for instance, Dax quickly realises that as the prisoners are already as good as condemned, his task as defence counsel is hopeless, and the scene ends abruptly before sentence is given on a devastating cut from his plea, "Therefore, I humbly beg you to show justice to these men . . ." into the firing squad being drilled by the sergeant. Similarly, Kubrick's use of tracking shots becomes a comment on the previous action rather than a mere stylistic device. As a simple example, there is the scene in which the artillery captain comes to Dax with the information which may secure the release of the three soldiers. He begins to explain, "I have something to tell you which may have great bearing . . ." And as Dax breaks in eagerly with "Come in, Captain," Kubrick cuts sharply into a tracking shot back and forth through the ballroom where General Broulard's guests are dancing, and where Dax is trying to find Broulard to relay the artillery captain's information and obtain a reprieve. The urgency here is not so much in the (rather lazy) movement of the camera, as in the movement of the film; but the irony (there can, of course, be no reprieve) is the camera's.

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Unlike so many American directors, Kubrick has never been afraid to indulge in the elliptical cut, assuming that the audience will be intelligent enough to follow—assuming, in *Paths of Glory* for instance, that they will remember who the artillery captain is, even though they have only seen him

once, when he refused General Mireau's order to fire on his own men. As early as *Killer's Kiss*, Kubrick commanded the same terse economy, but this film also reveals the havoc which could be wrought when he forgot his main line and tried to explain too much and too heavily. The film opens tightly and well with a young boxer, Davy, nervous and impatient, waiting on a railway platform. A first person narrative, revealing that he is a failure, begins "It's crazy how you can get yourself into a mess sometimes . . ." (the trap again), cutting into a long, brilliantly evocative flashback sequence in his dingy, lonely room as he wanders aimlessly, looking at himself in a mirror with postcard photographs of his parents stuck in the corners, pouring a drink of water at the wash-basin, and we notice through the window a girl in the apartment opposite; he crosses the room, feeds the goldfish, glances at the girl, absent-mindedly smooths his hair, lies down on the bed, the telephone rings. As he talks to his manager, Kubrick cuts to the girl's apartment where she makes coffee and watches him. They leave their apartments simultaneously, crossing in the courtyard below as Davy heads for the subway and his prizefight, Gloria for the car driven by Rapallo, her seedy middle-aged lover.

The film thus neatly establishes its main line—the relationship between the two, who have yet to meet—and maintains it through the cleverly intercut sequences of Davy losing his fight and Gloria working at Rapallo's dubious dancehall, which suggest that Davy's sense of failure and Gloria's entanglements must bring trouble. It is after their actual meeting, engineered a trifle melodramatically when Davy saves her from assault by Rapallo in her bedroom, that the film begins to crack, in a long narrative sequence in which Gloria reveals her past in a complicatedly Freudian tale of love and guilt involving her father and sister. Apart from the fact that this story is narrated over images of the sister dancing which make it impossible either to watch or to listen, the

information conveyed is irrelevant to their relationship, and brings the film to a standstill. It never really recovers, although the final sequences, in which Davy falls into his trap, are good: trying to solve his own dilemma as well as Gloria's, Davy challenges Rapallo on his own ground, is betrayed by the cowed Gloria, and finally forced to kill Rapallo.

Although *Killer's Kiss* is only partly successful, and meanders too much to achieve the taut, driving inevitability of the Kubrick "film as trap" which I have tried to define, it is a curiously attractive film, evidently made under the dual influence of neo-realism (the sequences in Davy's room, or when he wanders quietly in Gloria's room, looking and wondering at her things) and Wellesian baroque (the fight among the wax dummies hanging in a storeroom, the beating up in the alley, a good deal of chiaroscuro lighting in the dancehall scenes and elsewhere). The film, too, reveals Kubrick's brilliant talent for pictorial composition, here perhaps a little mannered, and later kept severely in check. One recalls with particular pleasure two shots: one of Davy telephoning, with a mirror behind him reflecting not only his head, but Gloria's lighted window opposite through which he is watching her; and the other, a brief, brilliant dream sequence, a hallucinating track through a deserted city street projected in negative.

The Killing, which followed, is probably Kubrick's first really successful film, holding its action in an iron grip from the moment the narrator (again) begins with "At exactly 3.45 on that Saturday afternoon..." to the moment when the gang leader resignedly waits for the police to pick him up. Rapidly and vividly, a sad and seedy little world of greed and misery, brutality and loneliness, casual treacheries and unexpected loyalties, is opened up, a world which carries within it the seeds of its own destruction, and is doomed to defeat almost before it begins to exist. The robbery plan begins to unfold, a pattern emerges, almost at once the cracks begin to appear, and nothing can stop it from winding remorselessly to its end. Compared to the later *Paths of Glory*, however, *The Killing* is a simple film, with crisp rather than dynamic editing, and tends to make its effects through purple patches rather than an overall visual style. The grey, naturalistic tone of the race track scenes and the methodical preparations for the robbery rubs shoulders oddly with mild expressionism in the climactic scenes: Marie Windsor and Vincent Edwards planning a double-cross, for instance, and leaning over a table-lamp so that it can throw sinister shadows on their faces; or the bizarrely effective sequence where the mortally wounded Elisha Cook returns home to shoot his wife to the parrot's cries of "Don't do it!", the wife dies muttering "It's just a bad joke without a punchline," and a last shot shows the parrot cackling over the scene from the floor in its upturned cage. Here, one feels, Kubrick is using camera angles, lighting effects and sardonic humour for their obvious dramatic connotations, in a manner far removed from the subtle and wholly integrated baroque of the murder of Quilty in *Lolita* (heralded by a brilliantly unsettling shot of Humbert's car looming up like a wraith out of the mist).

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A number of films—Robert Wise's *The Set Up*, for instance—achieved the same taut, fatalistic inevitability as *The Killing*; and although *Paths of Glory* carried the style to a subtler, altogether more imaginative plane, it was with *Lolita* that Kubrick demonstrated that, despite the failure of *Spartacus*, it was possible to adapt his style to both complexity and blockbuster length. *Lolita*, in fact, is a perfect example of Kubrick's

film as trap, with the added complexity that although society closes its ranks in disapproval of pervers like Humbert, in this case society is ignorant of his activities, and the trap which closes in on him is a product of his own mind. The film therefore opens with Humbert setting, and falling victim to, his own trap: behind the credits we watch his grave, delicate, sensuous joy as he very tenderly paints Lolita's toenails—a joy he knows cannot last because either Lolita will grow out of the age of nymphetry, or another admirer of nymphets (Quilty) will wrest her from him, or the police will finally catch up with him. In fact however, as Humbert himself eventually recognises, he has misinterpreted "the designations of doom" in his suspicions of Quilty as both policeman and nymphetophile, and Lolita herself, tired of his world of strained and orchidaceous passions, provides her own unexpected solution by running away to an ordinary, healthy, normal, dull husband. But, as we see in the brilliant opening sequence following the credits, Humbert is already caught in his trap and is impelled to kill Quilty. These twin prologues—the airy toe-painting and the long, tortuous track through the baroque jumble of packing-cases, statues, bottles, glasses and paintings in Quilty's house—are the two halves of the film in microcosm as it drives through on its firmly single, though tortuous line of Humbert's fantasy/obsession.

The real opening of the film, with the camera tracking Humbert's car along the street to Mrs. Haze's house, following him upstairs and around as she shows him round, and out into the garden for his first glimpse of Lolita, sets the note of elegance and light. On a close-up of Humbert sitting in the garden peering over the edge of a book, the camera tracks gracefully back to reveal that he is reverently studying Lolita's gyrations with a hula-hoop. The sequence at the ball, where Humbert exercises his ingenuity to avoid Lolita's mother and indulge his pleasure in watching his nymphet dance, opens with an overhead shot of the dance floor, craning down to pick out Humbert and his group, matched later by a crane up from the dancers to the gallery where Humbert, absorbed in watching Lolita, is rudely interrupted by the arrival of Mrs. Haze. In this first half, the style has a fluid grace worthy of Ophüls himself.

As Humbert's obsession darkens, however, so the style seems to change and grow more nervous. Kubrick's habit of keeping his camera still during dialogue scenes, so patiently restful in the sequence where Humbert waits for Lolita to stop crying after she learns of her mother's death, secure in the knowledge that she can only turn to his arms for comfort, later becomes broodingly ominous. The toenail-painting sequence, for instance, so airy behind the credits, is quite different when it reappears in the film proper. It is still a peak moment in Humbert's joy, but it is also the scene in which he first suspects that Lolita is excruciatingly bored. The sudden, swift movement of the camera in to Lolita at the climax of their argument presages the second, wild *Odyssey* fleeing along the roads which will end in Lolita's departure. The film grows heavier, more abrupt in style, matching the increasing violence of Humbert's obsession, and culminating in the swift track along the lowering dark facade of the hospital where he finally loses his Lolita for ever.

Here, and in *Dr. Strangelove*, with its brilliant balance between choppy newsreel urgency and the darkly brooding, flowing menace of its interiors, Kubrick has evolved a style which allows him to range with perfect freedom from utter seriousness to the wildest slapstick, without ever loosening the film's claw-like grip on the audience. One awaits future developments with confidence. And excitement.

IN THE PICTURE

The British Lion Stakes

PENELOPE HOUSTON writes: By the time this appears in print, it is to be assumed that the great British Lion sale will have been completed, and that the company will be under new ownership. But even writing at a disadvantage, with the end of the story still to be told, it seems worth recording the timetable of possibly the most acrimonious couple of months in the long crisis-studded history of the British cinema.

Until the middle of December, 1963, it seemed that the crisis (see last SIGHT AND SOUND) was one of studios threatened with closure and films delayed in reaching the cinemas. Since December 20th, very little has been heard about these things. Reporters went down to Shepperton to watch darkness closing on the studio with the last day of shooting on *The Pumpkin Eater*; but the shut-down so heralded did not in fact last very long, and by mid-January a horror movie, *Witch and Warlock*, had already moved in. In any case, everyone's attention was now focused elsewhere, for on December 20th the first report of the British Lion sale broke in the press. The NFFC exercised its option to acquire (for £795,000) the half of the share capital held by the five directors (David Kingsley, the Boulting Brothers, Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat), having offered them until the end of the year to exercise their option to buy the company. The Boultings later described this as a "derisory period"; the NFFC claimed that the British Lion directors were given reasonable time, having been privately apprised of the Corporation's intentions at the end of November. And the Boultings' answer to this was, in effect, that they had no reason to suppose the Board of Trade would wish to disrupt the affairs of a company which had been run, as everyone agrees, with great commercial flair since the five directors took over in 1958.

On December 20th the first shots were also fired in the House of Commons. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade confirmed the Government's belief that the company should be under private rather than public ownership; and Mrs. Eirene White, for the Labour Party, said that "the suggestion that British Lion is to be sold to some private ownership is something we are not prepared to countenance."

With only a short lull over Christmas, the opposition forces speedily mobilised. The British Lion directors insisted from the outset that only continued Government participation could keep up the company's strength and so sustain its independence. The film unions, backed by the TUC; the independent film-makers; the Labour spokesmen in the House; and a group of six Tory M.P.s, including Mr. Iain Macleod and Mr. Angus Maude, expressed varying degrees of anger and concern at the proposed sale.

Then, on December 29th, came the disclosure that the principal (indeed at that time only) bidder was Mr. Sydney Box, heading a group including the new Lord Willis and backed by financial support from the Standard Industrial Trust. At that time, it all looked like very plain sailing. "There is no reason why the negotiations should not be complete in two or three weeks," said Mr. Box. The sale "will have a stimulating effect on future independent production," said Mr. Terry of the NFFC.

By January 3rd, however, *The Times* was suggesting that the NFFC's attitude had undergone two recent and major changes. They were prepared to consider other bids (Sir Michael Balcon's hat was already in the ring); and they were prepared to maintain some sort of stake in the company, with Mr. Box expressing his own willingness to go along with this arrangement. By the end of the first week of January, under heavy pressure from all sides, the Government seemed to have rethought its own position. Mr. Heath promised Mr. Douglas Jay and Mrs. White that there would be no snap decision, and there was no more talk of the sale going through in a couple of weeks.

Meanwhile, teams of prospective bidders began to line up. Mr. Leslie Grade expressed an interest; Sir Michael was joined by Peter



HITCHCOCK REHEARSES SEAN CONNERY AND TIPPI HEDREN IN A SCENE FROM "MARNIE", HIS NEW THRILLER ABOUT A GIRL THIEF.

Sellers, Tony Richardson, John Osborne, and other independents; a firm of property developers put up a suggestion to build a new studio, with the rest of the existing site given over to housing.

Next, on the 16th, came Mr. Heath's statement in the House: the sale was to be negotiated by the NFFC, for a price of £1,600,000, to a purchaser able to give assurances that the company would remain independent and that the facilities of Shepperton would continue to remain available. Government support to the industry, he considered, should be limited to "the provision through the NFFC of a certain amount of risk-bearing finance." Mr. Heath, said *The Guardian*, was "acting against the advice of large sections of the industry and M.P.s of all parties." He had "shown himself remarkably insensitive to opinion," commented *The Observer*. And within a few days the Cinematograph Films Council, by a ten to eight vote, had appealed to him to reverse his decision.

The announcement, however, brought other groups into the running. Sam Spiegel and John Woolf had by now joined forces with Leslie Grade; Edward Martell's Freedom Group announced that they would "welcome an opportunity of taking our campaign against restrictive practices into the film industry"; John Bloom, washing machine tycoon, came in with a group including Jack Hylton, Anthony Mann, Terence Young, and others; Stanley Dubens, an agent, headed another team; and the Federation of Film Unions were prepared to put up their own bid. By January 29th, the NFFC had decided that the conditions of sale should include its right to nominate a member to the board of the company. And at the end of the month came the list of final runners in the stakes, made up of the Balcon, Box, Grade, Bloom, Dubens, Martell and Union groups.

On February 4th the Commons returned to the matter, Mr. Heath announcing that the NFFC would hold a special share in the company, with "the right to veto the company's voluntary liquidation, the right to veto the sale of the undertaking, and the right to veto the allotment of any capital to shareholders." It could also veto any disposal of the interest in Shepperton Studios, "except in certain specified circumstances." Dissatisfied, the Opposition forced a division, and the Government carried the day by a majority of 60. A few days later the NFFC announced its own timetable: full details had been despatched to the prospective bidders, who had until March 11th to consider their offers...

These are only the salient facts; and beneath them have run fierce tensions. The Boultings fought a brilliant public relations battle; Sir Michael Balcon showed that he had lost none of his old skill in his swift mobilisation of his forces; and the Government yielded a

little ground under pressure. Meanwhile, the British Lion directors won a High Court apology from Mr. Box for alleged slander in a press statement; the Boultings wrote a savage account of their dealings with the NFFC in Mr. Macleod's *Spectator*; and the whole controversy has been conducted angrily, acrimoniously and bitterly. There seems no doubt that, whatever the outcome, things can never be quite the same again; and no doubt that the end of the British Lion affair does not mean the end of the industry's problems. Mrs. White has put the case for a government enquiry: it would seem to be a strong one.

Tribulations of a Censor

NEVILLE HUNNINGS writes: It all began in November 1961, when the Swedish censor board cut some scenes in *Krigsförbrytare* (*Secrets of the Nazi Criminals*) because they might encourage defeatist attitudes in the present cold war situation. The film company complained to the Ombudsman that the chairman of the board, Erik Skoglund, had exceeded his authority in basing his decision on grounds of foreign policy, and the Government a month later allowed the film to be shown without cuts. The Ombudsman's decision came out in January 1963, acquitting Skoglund of exceeding his authority but suggesting that the reasons for the board's decisions might be made clearer and more concise. This was followed in May by the promulgation of new censorship regulations in which it was laid down that the Swedish censors may not *prima facie* order cuts in a film which has won or is expected to win recognition as a film of substantial artistic merit.

Last October, the censor board, while Skoglund was away on holiday, passed Bergman's latest film *Tystnaden* (*The Silence*) without cuts, partly on the grounds of Bergman's artistic integrity. The film's subject, a kind of perverted nymphomania, had been treated unusually outspokenly, and the censors' action aroused a storm of protest. The board was reported by three private individuals to the Ombudsman, who asked the board for its attitude to the censorship regulations; a majority of the board (but not Skoglund) stated in its reply that it considered all censorship for people over 18 should be abolished. At the same time, the Minister of Education, who is responsible to Parliament for the operation of the film censorship, said in the Riksdag that he would like to see the censorship abolished completely.

The storm over *Tystnaden* had hardly had time to die down before the censor board, on December 29th, issued a complete ban on Vilgot Sjöman's second film, *491*, which showed a group of six delinquent boys who engage in a whole range of violent and perverted activities. This was in fact only the fourth time that the censor had imposed a complete ban on a Swedish film, the previous occasions being: Sjöström's first film, *Trädgårdsmästaren*

(*The Gardener*) in 1912; Stiller's *Dolken* (*The Dagger*) in 1915, in which Lars Hanson made his screen debut; and Lasse Burman's *Det Hände i Natt* (*It Happened Last Night*) in 1956, although this was later passed after cuts were made. The ban on *491* was voted for by the chairman, Skoglund, and the two doctor members of the board, with the approval of the board's psychiatric adviser. The two women members of the board, a writer and a child psychologist, were in favour of passing the film for persons over 15 if some cuts were made. The producers immediately appealed to the Minister of Education, whose verdict is still awaited. At the same time Harry Schein, director of the new Swedish Film Institute, announced the formation of a committee to study the psychological effect of films on their audiences, and the advisory Film Censorship Council recommended that the ban on *491* should be lifted. The Swedish Film Institute even had sufficient confidence in the film to approve its entry for the Cannes and Berlin Festivals this year, although it hastened to add that this did not mean that the festival authorities would necessarily accept it.

Swedish films are also meeting difficulties in other Scandinavian countries. *Tystnaden*, *Jungfrukällan* and *En Söndag i September* have all been banned in Finland, where a demonstration against film censorship recently took place outside Parliament House. And *Raggare* has been banned in Denmark, where a committee set up in May 1963 by the Minister of Justice is at present examining the whole question of censorship, and is thought likely to recommend the total abolition of film censorship for adults.

Meeting Mary Astor

CHARLES HIGHAM writes: Still a charmer at 57, Mary Astor was in Sydney as part of a world cruise which has come as a reward of many years of television work. Her career, spanning more than forty years of screen history from silent two-reelers to *Return to Peyton Place* and *Youngblood Hawke*, has included a co-starring role with John Barrymore in *Don Juan*, a memorable battering in Ford's *Hurricane*, snatching an Oscar from under Bette Davis's nose in *The Great Lie*, and getting her come-uppance at the hands of Humphrey Bogart in (need one add?) *The Maltese Falcon*. As we sat talking in the impersonal steamer lounge of the *Oronsay*, Tchaikovsky from a television set nearby reminded her that in *The Great Lie* she had made an Australian tour as a temperamental pianist who left her baby with Bette, and she said that all the time she had been in Naples it had seemed oddly familiar—until she had found the explanation in remembering *Dodsworth*. All the way through the picture she had been the Other Woman on a Neapolitan island, and had played the part against a back projection of the real thing.

Mary Astor spoke warmly of Huston, who, she said, maintained that congenital liars were always slightly out of breath and had made her run round the set three times before each scene as the *Falcon's* Brigid O'Shaughnessy, just to make sure she delivered the lines properly. During the shooting of *Across the Pacific*, the Pearl Harbor attack prophetically included by Huston in the script actually took place, so the scene had to be re-shot as the bombing of the Panama Canal. "All the way up to the première we were watching the newspapers every day," she said. "If John had been right again it would have cost Warners the bankroll."

The Great Lie, she said, had been deliberately sent sky high by herself and Bette Davis, who had re-written most of the script to the despair of the director, ex-English music-hall comic Edmund Goulding. Exasperated by the scenes in which Mary is having a baby in a lonely desert shack, Bette dressed up as a man and strode up and down outside the bedroom in a parody of waiting-for-the-baby that laid the crew in the aisles. But shooting an intended comedy, Preston Sturges' *The Palm Beach Story*, wasn't so much fun. "Sturges wanted a dizzy blonde for my part," she told me. "Landed with Mary Astor, he made her life a hell." And she had nothing good to say for her performance, admired by *Sequence* long ago, as the rapacious fast-talking Countess de Centimiglia in the film.

Paris Notes

LOUIS MARCORELLES writes: Writing about Richard Leacock in *Cahiers*' recent special number on the American cinema, Jean-Luc Godard faulted his films for their lack of *mise en scène*. Here he put his finger on the main problem which faces practitioners of direct cinema if they are ever to go beyond pure reportage. It is hardly

FRANCOISE DORLEAC AND JEAN DESAILLY IN A STREET SCENE FROM "LA PEAU DOUCE", FRANCOIS TRUFFAUT'S NEW FILM.



surprising that the question should interest Godard: one has only to recall *Une Femme est Une Femme*, to my mind his best film to date and the first attempt to use the techniques of direct cinema for dramatic purposes. *Le Mépris*, although made in Italy under extremely difficult conditions, was filmed entirely in direct techniques; and Jean Seberg, playing a young reporter with camera constantly to hand in Godard's sketch for *Les Plus Belles Escroqueries du Monde*, bears the name of Patricia Leacock in dual honour of *A Bout de Souffle* and Richard Leacock.

An encounter between Godard and another pioneer of direct cinema has just taken place in Paris, for the filming in 16 mm. of a sketch which picks up the story told by Anna Karina to Jean-Paul Belmondo in the long café sequence of *Une Femme est Une Femme*: a young woman sends telegrams to two lovers to switch their rendezvous. She thinks she has mixed them up, but in fact she hasn't, so she finds herself in a fix. Albert Maysles (of *Showman*), who came from America expressly to work on the film, was to improvise round the actors with his camera; but they would nevertheless be working from a text written by the director. The scene is an action painter's little Montparnasse studio where the girl comes to make her unnecessary excuses. The actors are non-professional: she, a Canadian cover girl, and he, a real sculptor. Godard watches their reactions like a hawk: the camera must capture expressions and intonations which are more real than real. Ideally, Godard says, the film will be edited as it was shot, to make up three or four long sequences. Maysles confirms their unity of approach: "We agreed almost instinctively on how the camera should move. In future Godard should handle his own camera; with his methods it is absolutely essential."

Godard's sketch is part of an omnibus film on the *quartiers* of Paris, produced by Barbet Shroeder and made entirely in 16 mm. colour with synchronous sound. The République section has been done by Jean-Daniel Pollet, and the Etoile by Eric Rohmer; Rouch will do the Gare du Nord, Astruc the Opéra, and Jacques Rozier the suburbs. The film, particularly Godard's share in it, makes one impatient to see what may come out of Leacock's project to film *Joan of Arc* from the trial records, with a group of young American stage actors. "I want to do the exact opposite of Bresson, who betrayed the spirit of the subject by an extreme stylisation which robbed it of all actuality." Direct cinema is moving on.

Service to Shorts

SOME FIGURES HAVE RECENTLY been produced on the earnings of short films, revealing yet again the shakiness of their finances. If a short achieves a run at a London art house, its earnings are likely to be in the region of a beggarly ten or fifteen pounds a week. And although the Eady Money payment (calculated on a basis of two and a half times the rental) helps out the producer in what would otherwise be a desperate situation, even this does not necessarily go very far. Mithras Films, enterprising producers of the Oxfam-sponsored short *Inheritance*, recently explained their own position in *The Observer*. "On information supplied to us as distributors, we calculated that the Eady Money payment [for the 6-week run of *Inheritance* at the Cameo Poly] would amount to £225. In fact we received only £74. Only then was it made clear that according to the number of claims made, the British Film Fund Agency fix a percentage for each claim period. Our share was only 33 per cent of two and a half times the rental." Mithras conducted a small market research investigation of their own, to see how their film was being received by audiences, and got some encouraging results to show potential buyers.

However depressing the figures look, the market for good shorts is a little stronger than it was a few years ago. A certain amount of audience resistance greets the more blatant programme fillers; and TV is in active competition with the cinemas for the best material. It is partly in recognition of this situation that Derek Hill has started his Short Film Service, launched at the end of January with a screening of seven films to an audience of critics, distributors and television representatives. Hill's plan is to act as middle-man between the producers (mainly foreign, since British film-makers at least have access to distributors) and the purchasers. For their annual subscription, the film distributors and TV companies get a useful monthly newsletter and admission to half a dozen screenings a year. Hill reports that within 48 hours of his first programme enquiries had been made about all the films shown, and that one at least may reach the circuits. For the future, he promises screenings of Borowczyk's *Renaissance*, John Sewell's *Everybody's Nobody* (with



INGRID BERGMAN PLAYS THE RICHEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD IN "THE VISIT", ADAPTED FROM THE PLAY BY FRIEDRICH DURRENMATT AND FILMED BY BERNHARD WICKI IN ITALY.

Bruce Lacey), a French short about Abel Gance, a Belgian survey of post-war Fascism (*The Lonely Man*) and *An Honest Man*, a story told by way of romantic picture postcards.

The Short Film Service has got off to a flying start and has attracted a good deal of press support, although the real test will come when the contracts are signed. If the service works out, it ought both to stimulate a more competitive market, which can only work to the advantage of the film-makers, and to ensure that prospective purchasers at least know what is available to them and (by way of press reaction) what an audience is likely to make of it. As talent scout for the short film world, Hill has quite a job in front of him.

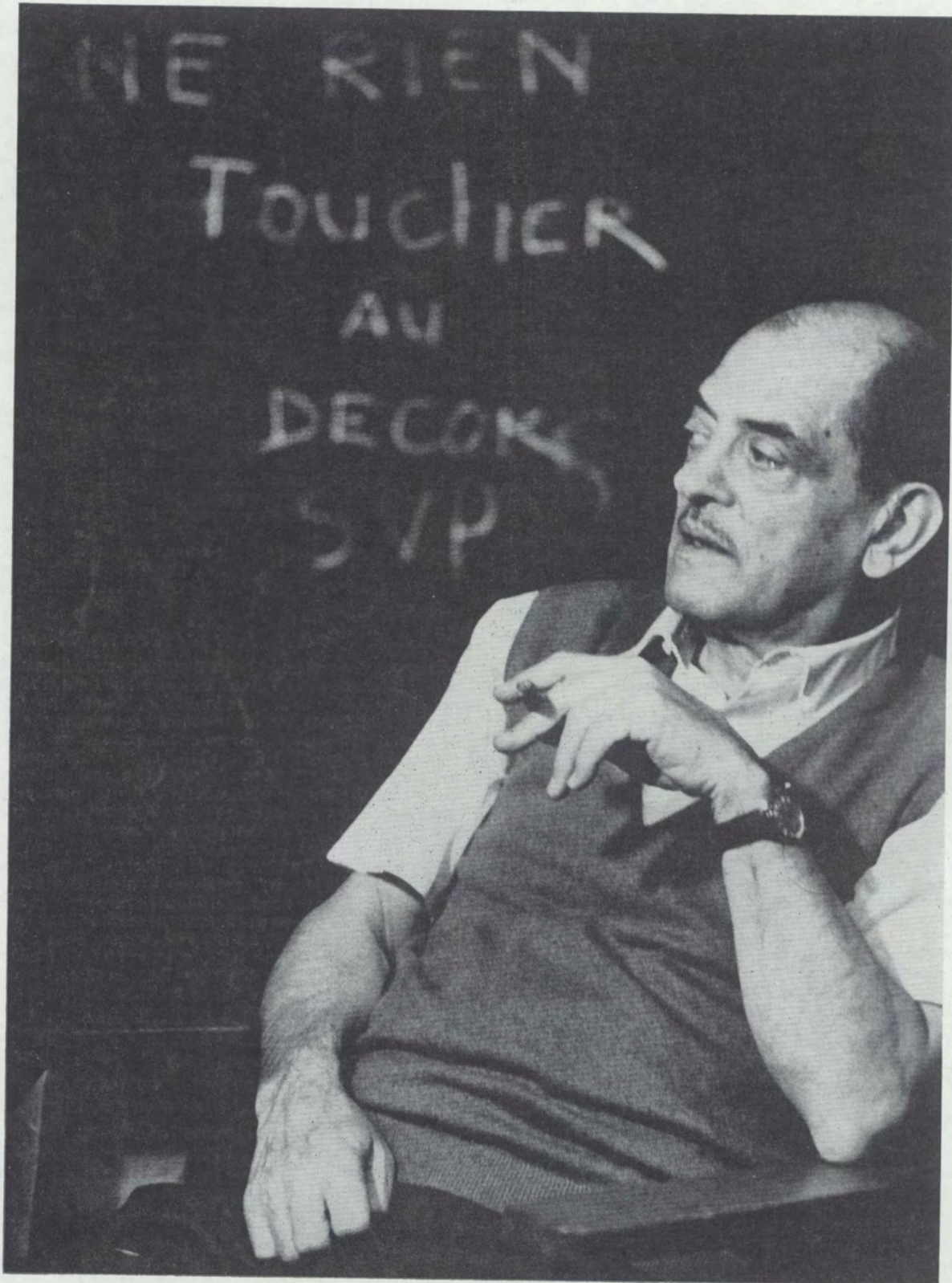
A Home Away from Home

RICHARD ROUD writes: In order that the re-modelling and extension of the National Film Theatre can be carried out, the South Bank building will have to be abandoned for about six months beginning on the first of May. As the re-modelling includes the enlargement of the tiny viewing theatre into one capable of seating 150 people, thus making it possible for the NFT to run simultaneously with its ordinary programmes films of interest to a smaller number, it would seem that the change-over, whatever the temporary upsetting of members' habits, is well worth while. Anyhow, the cinema to which the NFT is moving is, although smaller, very luxurious indeed. It is situated in the new Vickers skyscraper on Millbank, between the Tate Gallery and Lambeth Bridge. "Rome n'est plus dans Rome; elle est tout où je suis," proclaimed an exiled general in one of Corneille's plays: the National Film Theatre programmes continue—without a break—as usual. Current seasons include a tribute to the late Robert Hamer, a survey of German films of the Thirties, and, for the quarter-centenary, a season of film adaptations of Shakespeare, including the new Russian *Hamlet* directed by Grigori Kozintsev.



FILMING IN MONTPARNASSE. ALBERT MAYSLES, JEAN-LUC GODARD, JOHANNE SHEAMKUS AND PHILIPPE HIQUILI.

Bunuel's



Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre



Jeanne Moreau in two scenes from Buñuel's new film, an adaptation of the novel by Octave Mirbeau which Renoir filmed in Hollywood in 1946, with Paulette Goddard. Location shooting is at an estate near Milly-la-Forêt; photography by Roger Fellous, and décor by Georges Wakhevitch.

THE ORGANISATION MAN



1959 WAS A NOTABLE YEAR FOR first films and new directors, and it is hardly surprising that with the French scoring their grand slam at Cannes, and the critics everywhere seduced by the whole innovatory idea of a New Wave, some things happening elsewhere were overlooked. Certainly Ermanno Olmi's first feature-length picture, *Il Tempo si è Fermato* (*Time Stood Still*) was one of the neglected films of that year as far as international audiences were concerned, though it did collect among other prizes a Golden Rhododendron, a trophy for the year's best film on a mountaineering subject. The result was that when *Il Posto* came along two years later it was thought of by most people as a first film, and that Olmi still tends to be regarded as a relative beginner, a promising young director with nothing like the body of work behind him of a Resnais or a Truffaut. As it happens, the reverse is true: by 1960 Olmi had already made thirty industrial documentaries, a striking enough record for a film-maker then still in his twenties.

It seems appropriate that he should have slid so unobtrusively into the critical consciousness, since he must be one of the quietest film-makers in the world. The long, long pause before the office party gets under way in *Il Posto*, or the pre-credits dance-hall scene in *I Fidanzati*, with the sound deadened down as the people straggle in to take their places around the room, are scenes which make out of silence something almost tangible. Communication in his films is a matter of sidelong glances, wary and guarded approaches with all the lines of retreat left open, before silence is broken and dialogue takes over. Olmi's people are terribly curious about each other (as, one feels, their director is himself), but it is the surreptitious

and almost impersonal curiosity of a man reading someone else's paper over his shoulder in a bus, while at the same time carrying his own identical paper. Curiosity becomes compulsive: other people are fascinating because they are other.

Curiosity of this sort may well be one of the motive forces of art—at least of the kind of works which are content to observe and to worry out reasons, to watch people's rational and irrational actions and to suspend judgment until all the evidence is in. Olmi's feature work so far has been of this kind. The director gives the impression not of having set his characters in motion to work out his drama for him, but of watching them from his own camouflaged and privileged vantage point, his attention so held by everything they do (the old woman in *Il Posto*, busily shovelling her lunchtime ham into a paper bag in the works canteen; the woman at the office party in the same film who so desperately wants someone to dance with her; the watchman in *Time Stood Still* going methodically about his household jobs but irritably snapping off a Housewives' Choice programme on the radio) that we are under a compulsion to watch with him. Olmi is the voyeur of innocence.

Such an attitude is, or can be, a result of the documentarist's training; and Olmi's seven years of film-making for Edison-volta, the big industrial firm based on Milan, clearly determined the kind of director he was going to be. His shorts themselves are unavailable here, and catalogue descriptions, though revealing enough about subjects, yield no clues as to method or the precise way in which Olmi worked out his apprenticeship. In general, as official film-maker for a big company, he was engaged on the usual mixture of instructional

ABOVE: SANDRO PANZERI IN "IL POSTO".

and PR work: films about the company's welfare services, its holiday camps and technical schools for employees; films about its big hydro-electric projects, which took him up to the dam sites in the Alps and the Dolomites; films about the use of fertilisers in agriculture; films whose titles range from *Il Pensionato*, concerned with the problems of a retired workman in adjusting himself to a new life of idleness, to the technicalities of *Cavo ad Olio Fluido a 220,000 Volt*. In 1958 Olmi made a Venetian documentary—but its title is *Venezia, Città Moderna*, and its theme the heavy industry which the city conceals from its tourists.

Olmi is still only thirty-two, and it is ten years since he began this long and unbroken connection with a single industrial company. Before that he had attended a dramatic school and staged productions of Giraudoux, Thornton Wilder and *The Italian Straw Hat*. But if the interest in acting came first, it has been overlaid by the years with Edisonvolta. Documentary, as such, is a usual enough background for a feature film-maker; but not precisely this kind of documentary. The British comparison would be with the units working for Shell or the Coal Board or the Transport Commission, and these have not proved to be the training grounds for our feature directors. And clearly there is a world of difference between the director who accepts a commission which involves him for a few months in the affairs of the sponsoring company, and the man who for years has been committed to the policies of a single organisation. Olmi's training seems to have made him a pragmatist; and, at the same time, it has brought him closer than most of his kind to the sources of power in a modern industrial society.

Work has been one of the great neglected subjects of the contemporary cinema. Neo-realism took more interest in the jobless, the homeless, the exiles from society, than in people simply earning their livings. *Rocco and his Brothers* brings its Southern family into industrial Milan, but plunges them into the relatively exotic world of the boxing ring; Pasolini's Roman layabouts treat work as an intolerable necessity; Aldo in *Il Grido* is another workless working man. British directors have given us Arthur Seaton at his lathe, Billy Liar in his undertaker's office, Jimmy Porter at his sweet-stall; but here the job has been either symbolic (undertaking), a necessary part of the background (the sweet-stall) or another setting where the rebel can flex his muscles (the workshop). Unlike the neo-realists, and unlike our own film-makers, Olmi is more interested in individuals out of the great conformist mass than in the rebels or the outcasts. That this lays him open to the charge of being a conformist himself, an organisation man in the full pejorative sense of the term, is hardly likely to worry him. Giovanni in *I Fidanzati* is neither more nor less valid as a character than Accattone or Arthur Seaton: he is the quiet, workmanlike, rather melancholy Olmi hero.

* * *

BBC Television enterprisingly snapped up *Time Stood Still* when the British distributors ignored it, and fitted the film into last year's international film season. Distributors presumably felt that it had hardly enough substance to attract the public, or that it was blighted by the commercial taint of documentary; and certainly it is hard to think of a feature built on slighter or sparser material. The scene is a dam site in winter, manned only by a couple of watchmen whose hut in the snows is connected by telephone and cable railway to the town far below. One of the men goes on leave, his temporary replacement being a cheerful young student from the city who is suffering from the familiar delusion that he will get a lot of reading done in such a setting. The old watchman has been established as disciplined, quiet and methodical, a man who follows his own tiny routines because he finds peace in order. The boy bangs about disturbingly, hammering at shelves

which repeatedly fall down, throwing himself around like a puppy in the snow, waking the quiet morning with yells of rock and roll. His reception is one of surly indifference, while at the same time Olmi's alert camera picks up all the hints of the older man's real concern that the stranger should get a good impression of his host and his shack. Slowly communication is established; but it is only when a storm batters at their hut, and the older man can take on a paternal role in looking after the boy, scared by the storm into imagining himself ill, that they achieve a relationship of trust.

This is all; and it is enough because the film is made by a director who finds no detail too slight or foolish to be worth recording. Warily, the boy and the older man circle around each other: when one leaves the room, the other makes an immediate dash for the table to snatch a look at the book he has been reading; when the boy emerges in a bright college sweater, the man hastily unearths something even more splendid for himself. This contest of infinitesimal details is funny because it is true, and true because it is funny: the boy is attractive but also irritating, the man withdrawn and gruff but hopelessly ingratiating. The film is a dialogue between two people, carried on not in words but in tiny happenings.

Time Stood Still sounds like an extremely simple film. Yet one has only to look at its editing techniques, and the way that Olmi can carry his audience through a series of entirely routine actions (the sequence of the old man alone on the site, for instance, going about his morning chores) by a series of easy yet sophisticated transitions, to realise that he knows precisely how to focus attention and to avoid the dead spots of monotony. *Il Posto* is again deceptively straightforward on the surface, and again the achievement is to integrate comment and action so adroitly that in the end one realises that a statement has been delivered without the film ever raising its voice or putting its feelings into words.

Domenico Trieste Cantoni is an old-fashioned boy from a working-class home in the suburbs of Milan, sent out to work as an office-boy so that his younger brother can stay on at school. He graduates to the job of clerk in the big industrial corporation; and he will probably spend the rest of his working life in the office with the dusty files, the clanking addressograph, and the broken electric light, moving slowly forward towards the coveted position at the front of the room. On the way to the job he has survived the hurdles of intelligence tests and psychological examinations, conducted by white-coated technocrats who seem to be living with deadly seriousness in their own world of fantasy problems. He has met a girl who finds work as a typist in the firm's main office, been rather more interested in her than she is in him, and sat out the office New Year party waiting for her. He has slipped into a career,



"I FIDANZATI": THE DANCE-HALL OF THE OPENING SEQUENCE.



like a cog into a piece of machinery; and Olmi tells us, in effect, not that he ought to be resigned but that he is—resigned, at eighteen, to the safe job, the security of a pension, the goal for which he has worked.

Il Posto is the most openly comic of Olmi's films, not least because of Sandro Panzeri's striking resemblance to the young Buster Keaton and his ability, like Keaton, to retreat into his own fortress of intense concentration, from which he gazes out, wide-eyed and unbelieving, at the world around him. Olmi surrounds Domenico with a whole gallery of people, briefly glimpsed yet instantly recognised: the old woman at the dance who stares so long and so lovingly at his bottle of wine; the raincoated man at the examination, labouring forlornly on after the others have handed in their papers; the beaming mother fondly escorting her too-tidy son to the examination room; the secretary standing smiling guard over her boss; the little moustachioed porter who lets the bells go on ringing; the old man hanging about the office where he used to work, tied to the habits which have controlled his life. In the world of the office, people move apathetically among their files: nothing changes. At home, as *Il Posto* reveals in the brief and dream-like sequence which pursues the office workers into their private lives, the quiet desperation may spill over: a man writes away all night in his lodgings, shielding his light from a prying landlady while he labours over some interminable novel; the gloomy looking woman, always late for work, has sons who rifle her purse.

It is the ability to keep these undercurrents of sadness flowing beneath a surface predominantly comic which makes *Il Posto* such a remarkable film. Domenico himself is not some pitiful little zombie doomed to be crushed by the industrial machine, and in fact we encounter the machine by way of people caught in the act of preserving their independence against its pressures. With Olmi, respect for his characters seems the paramount consideration; but respect for them as they are, not as they might be. Few film-makers convey less of the traditional liberal reformist's attitude, that he could easily bring himself to like people if only they were different.

* * *

Il Posto is a reticent film, and Olmi's first two features both suggest an odd quality of respect for his characters' privacy. We watch Domenico from the point of view of an observer stationed in a corner of the office. On his first day at work we see him dashing up the stairs to what he hopes will be a reunion with the girl, Antonietta, then slowly, stealthily, making up his mind to approach her as she stands by the window; we follow him down the blank corridor to the encounter with the preoccupied office manager and his overpoweringly motherly

secretary; then to sit at his porter's desk, a baffled newcomer with nothing to do; then to the canteen lunch and a wait in the rain from which he is rescued not by Antonietta but by a friendly old woman with an umbrella. All this is documented, authentic, and made continually enlivening by Olmi's apparent inability to think of any situation as hackneyed, so that the enquiring eye always finds some human detail to light on. But we are not deeply engaged with Domenico's emotions on this crucial day, and even by the end of the film know little more about him than we might deduce from the first shot of his innocent early morning stare, as he wakes in the bed set up for him in his parents' kitchen.

Olmi's latest film, *I Fidanzati*, makes it clear that he means to penetrate further, and to adapt his technique to ends altogether more subjective. Again, the basic theme is disarmingly plain: a factory worker has the chance of promotion to a more skilled job, taking him away from north Italy to the firm's new factory in Sicily. He must leave behind his father, now too old to fend for himself, and his fiancée Liliana, who has an uneasy conviction that this eighteen months' separation will bring to a full stop a relationship which has already collapsed into an unexciting routine. Giovanni takes the job, and the change of setting, the loneliness and the curiosity aroused by an alien landscape, prove not destructive but reviving. He discovers Liliana again through the letters they exchange—the chance to relive experiences on paper, but to see them, as she writes, “as though we were different... and better.”

The sequence in *Il Posto* which takes us into the office workers' lives perhaps prepared the way for the opening of *I Fidanzati*. Liliana and Giovanni trail into the dance-hall, to take up what is clearly their usual position, at their usual table, for the drab ritual of an evening's entertainment. “E allora...?” says Giovanni. Will she dance or won't she? She won't—or not with him—and in a series of brief, subjective flashbacks, unexplained and unprepared for, we are shown the offer of the job, Liliana's hurt reaction, and the problem of the father who must be left behind (a glimpse of the old man; then Giovanni's dialogue with the porter of an old people's home, and shots of one of the inmates, a senile and melancholy figure, Giovanni's father as he might be in this setting). The recollection is not coherent and orderly, but a jumble of feelings; and from the dance-hall Olmi moves directly to the aeroplane, the arrival, Giovanni's welcome to Sicily.

Much later in the film, after Giovanni's visit to a Sicilian carnival, Olmi takes us back to the dance-hall, still a grey and forlorn place, with its couple of middle-aged women solemnly leading the dance, but seen now through the dreamy haze of memory. And later still, as he reads Liliana's letters from the North, she moves towards him, not the sullen, white-faced girl of the opening shots, but the Liliana he had first met at a still earlier dance, the Liliana of the letters. These scraps of memory and imagination, the sense of time not as something done with forever but something which can be relived, make up the emotional core of the film, around which Olmi builds his picture of Giovanni's days in Sicily. Dinner in the empty dining-room of the company hotel on his first night; a session in the television room, arriving just as a programme is ending, and tiptoeing out while one solitary figure remains slumped in his chair; then a retreat up the stairs to bed. On the drive in he has seen the long rows of lights from the great industrial works; and now there is another light down the road, and a cheerful racket of music. But when he gets there it is to find a deserted café, with the chairs piled on the tables, the proprietress crouched over her accounts to the blare of her transistor radio, and the counterboy poised for flight, assembling his coffee at breakneck speed before running for the last bus home.

This is not loneliness dramatised but loneliness observed; and as usual Olmi makes no effort to suggest that the incidents in themselves are other than trivial, or that they mean more to Giovanni than they appear to mean. The real alien setting

comes with the morning, the contrast between the old Sicilian town, now bulging with company personnel, and the great factory, a giant industrial encampment on the edge of nowhere. It is enough for the director simply to track his camera past the long wire fence for the documentary aspect of his theme to take hold of one. The middle section of the film shows Giovanni at work and settling into new lodgings (involving a typical Olmi encounter with a landlady over the matter of a coat-hanger and a jammed door). Later come the lackadaisical weekend wanderings about the countryside, the loitering around empty streets in which even a loudspeaker car becomes something to watch. Then the correspondence with Liliana takes hold, not merely as a link with the familiar world but as an enlarging of experience. Olmi ends his film on a typical gesture: Giovanni's realisation that there is no reason why he shouldn't telephone Liliana (on a Sunday, of course, for the cheap rates), and the triumph of their short, stilted and entirely conventional conversation.

I Fidanzati is regarded by Olmi himself as marking a transition in his work; and one could say that he is gradually approaching his central characters with more confidence in his own understanding of their emotions, that the balance between documentary fact and subjective experience is perceptibly shifting. Yet there is also, one feels, a kind of innate reticence in the director himself, a withdrawal from emotional extremes, which is part of the charm of his films. Indeed it seems typical of Olmi's habit of maintaining a certain distance that the converse of the lovers should be conducted on paper, and that he should end his film on Giovanni happy and alone, sheltering against a pale Sicilian wall in a downpour, with a piece of newspaper balanced on his head.

* * *

Two left-wing French critics, Raymond Borde and André Bouissy, take a querulous view of Olmi in a recent book on the new Italian cinema. The cardinal virtues of his characters, they complain, are "kindness and stupidity," his own vision is "resigned and timid," and he gives us "*en définitive, le point de vue patronal des psychotechniciens*." His first feature, they recognise, "excels in the minute description of everyday life . . . but that isn't a reason either for making *Il Tempo si Fermato* or for going to see it."

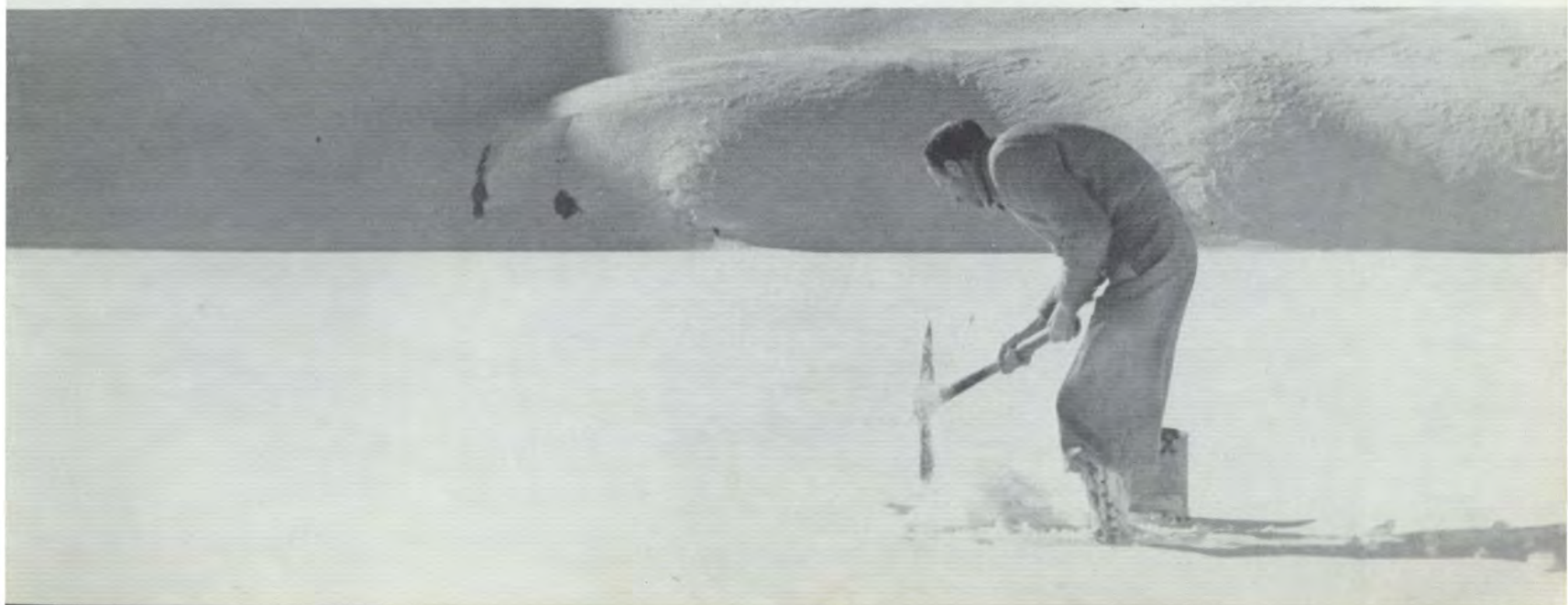
Yet this "resigned" film-maker, the Edisonvolta man, has been confronting in his work some of the more telling facts about industrial society. The companies for which his heroes work are not brutal employers of slave labour: they provide the efficient factory canteens, the company hotels, the company cars, the whole apparatus of industrial welfare. Nor, in Olmi's world, are there those repeated exacerbating encounters with people in minor positions of authority which make up so

much of the stock in trade of our own working-class "realism". Olmi recognises the fact, unfashionable but none the less demonstrably true, that on the whole people would rather make efforts to get on with each other than not. One can imagine, far too clearly, such scenes as Giovanni's arrival in Sicily, or his visit to the old people's home, as they might be handled in the standard film of protest by a director anxious to make his own position completely clear at all points. All too frequently, the anti-authoritarian attitude, useful corrective though it may often be, blocks the film-maker off at square one: his preconceptions permit of no advance. *Il Posto*, it might be said, shares the same formula of the ironic "happy ending" as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* or *Billy Liar*. But in Olmi's film the future looks more realistically bleak, because there has been no struggle, and nothing to struggle with.

In *I Fidanzati* Olmi suggests that the trap which closes at the end of *Il Posto* may be prized open by love, and that love can grow only on a foundation of respect. He reverts, in an altogether more complex form, to the key theme of *Time Stood Still*, the ability of two people to conduct what he calls a "dialogue", and the difficulties in the way of even this simple aspiration. This may not be the profoundest of comments, and to strip it down to such formulaary terms makes Olmi sound altogether too much like the Catholic welfare officer of modern Italian cinema. He is at once too pragmatic for that, and too little of a theorist. The trouble, moreover, with doctrinaire criticism of the Borde-Bouissy kind is that it makes remarkably few allowances for the film-maker's own temperament. The watchman in *Time Stood Still*, the boy in *Il Posto*, Giovanni in *I Fidanzati*, might all be giving us different facets of the same man; and it becomes difficult not to suspect that they all have something of Olmi in them. They observe, they withdraw, they are hesitant about committing themselves. They are, as Domenico admits, rather old-fashioned people.

Their creator has said that he intends to go on making films about men at work, because "this theme contains so many others." And he seems likely to remain something of a miniaturist in the cinema, if only because one cannot as yet see how so much concern for precision of detail could be spread out over a broader canvas. But *I Fidanzati* also shows that Olmi, for all his air of being the self-taught documentarist, the man who stumbled across the art of film-making at some dam site in the Dolomites, has been taking account of such things as Resnais' experiments with time. *I Fidanzati* is set in the most modern of film tenses: the eternal present. The time-slip gives Olmi, as it has given Resnais, a door into the locked regions of his characters' minds; and in *I Fidanzati* he is in the act of opening it.

"TIME STOOD STILL".



INTERVIEW WITH FEDERICO FELLINI



BY GIDEON BACHMANN

The following is an excerpt from a book by Gideon Bachmann, tentatively entitled *FEDERICO FELLINI TALKS*, which will be published by Messrs. Simon & Schuster in New York. Mr. Bachmann, who has given us permission to publish this excerpt, writes from Rome:

"The book from which you want to publish an excerpt is the fruit of many months of tape-recorded conversations not only with Fellini himself, but with all the people who have been important in his life: his family, his collaborators, his early girl friends, his actors, producers, writers and his cronies. Naturally there is a lot of editing in the final text. For example the texts by Fellini himself are condensations of hours and hours of talk recorded at his home, in his car, at restaurants, in the studio, on the beach during the shooting of *8½*, etc. etc. When Fellini saw some of the edited texts he felt this necessary condensation made him sound too serious, too definitive. '*Mi pare, che non escho abbastanza buffonesco.*' And indeed his speech is filled with side comments, jokes, mannerisms of all kinds to make you feel that he is not so sure about anything he says, that perhaps there are other answers, even in him. Most of this I have cut, to make the ideas stand out more clearly. But I wouldn't want your readers to get the impression that Fellini talks in exactly the manner I sent you. And don't forget, I've had to translate everything from Italian, too, which adds an element of interpretation unavoidable on my part."

FELLINI: You know, I really like to talk. But I have experienced and witnessed so much dogmatism in my life that I am always afraid of sounding like one of those terrible dragon priests from my childhood: pompous and presumptuous. I have acquired a real fear of statements of an intellectual kind. I keep saying to myself that I like intellectuals, but in my heart I am always looking for excuses to get along without them . . . And let's not make a mistake about defining an intellectual. I have the maximum respect for the intellectual in the true sense of the word: that is, a man who lives through the highest part of his human nature. But then there are those who make a profession out of being an intellectual, and that seems to me like an extremely dangerous position.

BACHMANN: *Is that why you are hanging the intellectual in effigy in *8½*?*

Well, it's Guido, the central character, who hangs him. He represents the greatest danger to Guido, because he is killing his spontaneity. Each time that Guido is about to come to life, this man tells him that it isn't worth being born. It is clear that in order to live, he has to free himself from that monster.

You must hate film critics—always dissecting and analysing.

Not necessarily. Sometimes I like them very much. Especially when they say good things about my work. I don't mean this in the simple sense, or because I want to be appreciated for my achievements. It's for what a good review does to my future work, because when I read it the wish to work comes to me. If a critic speaks badly about me—I mean, about my films—it makes me depressed and unhappy. Such a critic is really

dangerous to me. He is my most mortal enemy. I feel almost imprisoned by his application to my work or myself of judgments based on standards established independently of me. Because that is what the professional intellectual spends his time doing: storing life away in carefully labelled, plastic drawers. They talk of 'understanding' life or art, but they are really only comparing expressions. You end up being 'like Proust' or 'influenced by Bergman'. I think that is because they can't originate real thoughts, because they don't have their own inner moral compass. Through their series of labels, definitions and conceptions, they close themselves off from a true comprehension of life. What is there to 'understand'? How can they ever understand? That figure of the intellectual is a nightmare for me, a ghost, walking in his death. In reality he is afraid of life, and he wants to tag everything, like a compulsive baggage attendant at a railway station, so that he can feel he is still at the centre of everything. It is at the moment he labels life that he renounces it: his principles become the bars of his jail . . .

* * *

Fellini was driving me to the station, after dinner at his house at Fregene outside Rome. He drives well, and much. I don't believe in psychologising things, so I feel it's just because he likes to keep moving. I noticed he was driving on beyond the station. Sometimes he is difficult to get started on something; mostly it is equally difficult for him to stop. He was driving me home, to Rome. I said nothing. I was hoping that it would mean he'd keep talking, too. It was dark, and the summer country roads were wet. Suddenly, without apparent connection to what had gone before, he said: "You know, my life is very short." Perhaps my face expressed concern, because he suddenly laughed:

No, I'm not ill. I mean my life as a film director. I feel that of all artists, the productive span of a film director is the shortest. Perhaps ten years, at most fifteen. It's such a mess to make films, you have to be absolutely sure of what you want to say.

Is that why you feel so personally involved? Your heroes don't seem to be such ideally complete people.



OPPOSITE: THE LAST SEQUENCE OF "*8½*". RIGHT: FELLINI ON THE SET.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS, EXCEPT THE ONE ON PAGE 84, ARE BY GIDEON BACHMANN.



FEDERICO FELLINI IN 1940. A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT ABOUT THE TIME OF HIS ARRIVAL IN ROME.

I don't think that I create heroes in my films in the conventional romantic or poetic sense. But there is always someone, like Guido in *8½*, who fights against the monsters, against neuroticism and fear, against the real dangers. His story can be told in many ways, but it is always the same story. Sometimes, in fact, I feel that I am all the time making the same film. Take *8½*. It could have been a fairy story. The Saraghina could really have been a dragon that spat fire, Guido's wife could have been an inquisitor who condemned him, and the cardinal could have been another monster from the flames of darkness. Or one could make a fable out of the story, like Ariosto did with *Orlando Furioso*. I simply told it as I did because for me this was the most congenial manner. It reaches people better; I think it's the more modern way. But the hero is really there: he is the one who in all the fairy tales succeeds in possessing the feeling of his own life, after cleaning up all the monsters that want to devour him.

Do you mean that in all your films you tell the same story?

Sometimes I get that feeling. But I can't say that I have a special direction, although I feel a certain evolution in myself and in the ways I find of saying things. I want to look at things from all sides; not to try to make them conform to a preconceived idea. So I'm interested in man, but on all his various levels, in his miscellaneous conditions and dimensions. And after all, I'm only a man myself. Maybe that answers your question about my personal involvement: I feel that an artist always talks about himself, and that the simple, daily things that go into a film should bear witness to being the fruits of the artist's anguish and concern. I don't want to sound as though I knew the final answer. I keep seeking. Actually that's all I want to show: that I am seeking.

I don't want to make pictures so that they can be 'understood'. This whole business about clarity seems to me to be some kind of an aristocratic game, like heirs gossiping at a funeral. All I want in my pictures is a real man, who lives a real life, who worries about money, about his wife, about the Church and about his work. You know what I don't understand? I don't understand when people say they don't understand. You watch the story of a man who tells you about his work, his mistresses, his troubles, his relationship to God.

There is nothing to understand: there is just listening and feeling whether the problems of this man are your own problems. That's all.

Here, then, is one of those eternal questions that critics are always asking. Don't you care whether your audience 'understands' your intentions? You must have thought about this question of the relation of artist to audience.

How can I worry about something completely unknown? Anyway, what does that word 'audience' mean? Who are they? It is a monster without any collective conscience or identity, and so it is impossible to be conditioned by their wants. If you pay attention to all that, you put yourself in a very humiliating and subservient position: that of slave to a very mysterious boss, a boss who doesn't know what he wants. It's the worst position for a man to find himself in, that of serving. It is up to you, as an artist, to be the boss. How could I possibly be concerned with the specific demands of people all over the world? All the millions of different desires . . . I don't make a film with Anita Ekberg because they like her in the U.S.A., or a picture about the benefits of drinking milk just because they like it in Switzerland. I just say something that I like to say, and because I am a normal man, I think that my problems and likes and dislikes, my fears and hopes, should interest other normal people. It is possible that subconsciously I try to tell a story that can be understood, but I think that the only people who will fail to understand are those who go to the cinema with the *intention* of understanding, so that they are really no longer free to react emotionally and without bias. And that kind of person will fail to understand *any* story.

You seem to take rather a collective view of the audience, despite the fact that you deny them a collective identity.

It is really more compassion, like one has for a flock of misguided sheep. The 'audience' is in the final analysis nothing but a creation of the film-makers. It is corrupt because it has been violated. In the hands of traditional film-makers, the cinema has become a form of art which allows no space for meditation. Instead, it has become a medium for psychological aggression; it assails you with its demand for a specific reaction. In this way, it has created a standard kind of reception, which is manoeuvred from the outside, by the author. People have become used to a certain approach: they have become used to being emotionally violated. When a film comes along which doesn't do that, they 'don't understand'.

You feel that it goes both ways, then: that the film-maker who pays attention to the audience becomes its slave, but at the same time, the kind of cinema which has been created until now in turn enslaves the audience, by pre-empting their emotional liberty?

There is really no exchange between maker and viewer. There is no space in which to think. At least with paintings and books you can allow yourself the luxury of a private meditation. But with movies there is no freedom at all; and, what is worse, there is a complicity between producers and audience to perpetuate this state of affairs. For example, the cinema always allows you to guess the endings of pictures. It flatters your 'intelligence' with 'plants', like an Ellery Queen thriller. It pre-arranges your feelings. They have created a machine to violate your true reactions. And this goes so deep that when these guideposts are not planted the spectator feels lost.

Are you speaking of all films to this date, or of what is essentially today an archaic form, the factory cinema? Aren't we coming out of this era of the violated intelligence?

Films made after a formula, factory films, are of course the maximum point of degradation. But the cinema contains in its nature the danger of psychological suggestiveness. It just isn't a meditative form; it is potentially naturalistic. A pistol shot in a film is a pistol shot that you hear—boom!—with your ears. All representations of reality in film appear to be 'objective', but they are really co-ordinated so as to assail the spectator with a definite point of view. It is much more difficult for a film-maker to be sincere than for a writer or an artist or a musician, because the means he uses are extremely dangerous. They are means—camera, editing, sound, movement—which tend to function directly on the plane of intellectual and psychological aggression. And they are very delicate weapons, and thus the more invincible. Film can influence you like music, like a tom-tom, like a form of magic. It is like playing a certain rhythm on an instrument—after a while everyone taps it along with you. Now, when this fantastic power is used for the liberation of the spectator, in other words when it is white magic, it is all right. But if it is used as black magic, it can lead to terrible results. It can parallel the influence that Hitler had and carry us to disaster.

So you feel that films can have a real sociological influence?

In the negative sense, definitely. For example in the promotion of collective thinking. To hear film distributors and producers talk of their public as having an 'average mental age' of between 13 and 17! It should make them want to help this audience to grow up, instead of making films for that kind of mentality. If one says constantly, "we are speaking to children," one conditions oneself to speaking childishly. But the mature mind wants to *discover*, not to *be told*. That's why I want to show man on all his various levels. I want to tell

stories as one does in a bar: you like it or you don't, but you don't say "what does it mean?" One man listens, another goes off home to bed. That's another reason why people always say my movies are autobiographical—men who talk in bars mostly talk about themselves.

Pictures are like friendly talks between men. That is the real key to this question. I want to create an atmosphere in which it will be pleasant to listen to one man tell his story. All I ask is that people listen and look. That is another reason why we have to make all possible efforts to free the movies from the trappings of their own form, so that things will be more readily acceptable on a non-complicated level. We have to get away from the slavery to the five senses, the alleged naturalism of the camera. It is completely phoney anyway: no camera and no tape recorder are 'true to life', thank God. In fact, our apparatus is much less objective than the human eye. After all, celluloid and tape are twice removed from life. And a human intelligence intervenes in the recording process.

Do you feel, then, that your own films are making a contribution towards greater simplicity, and towards a new way of responding to a film work?

It is a very hard tradition to break. I hope that all good film-makers are working towards abolishing it, but there is so much to be done. Very few film-makers really invite the audience to participate in the inner feeling of the filming. And most authors are still trying to fill out every dark corner, leaving nothing to the imagination and feeling of the viewer. It's the rigidity of this concept of 'entertainment', which is supposed to take people 'out of themselves'. I guess I am trying to do just the opposite. But it's hard to uproot such an entrenched education. And, you know, I don't want to go to extremes:

THE LAST SEQUENCE OF "8½": LA SARAGHINA AND THE CARDINAL





FELLINI WITH SANDRA MILO.

that's just as bad as putting labels on things. So I don't say that people shouldn't have fun when they go to the movies—after all, I'm having the greatest fun of all in making the films—but I don't want only entertainment or only philosophy or only religious things. It has to be in between. To go to the movies shouldn't be just like going out to dinner, neither should it be like going to school. It has to be a middle way . . .

And do you feel people are ready for a new approach?

People are always ready to be given confidence. And I'm not demanding any complicated decisions, or intellectual capacities. Really, I just want them to be themselves. It would be nice if after a certain time an attitude to films could be cultivated which matched people's attitudes to the other arts. For instance, that films should be seen twice. Seeing everything quickly, sitting and smoking with a nice woman . . . that is another basic limitation of movies: their quality of vulgarity. You are willing to listen twenty times to a symphony before you begin to feel what the composer has said to you. A real book has to be read, and read again. But movies . . . people treat them like football games. Despite anything that anyone will tell you, films are still in their infancy. But they could be the deepest and most exciting mirrors in which we could find ourselves and the rest of humanity. They have the potential of great magic, of being a way to think about ourselves, about our future. We could get to know ourselves better.

Your saying that film isn't yet up to the other arts, reminds me of your previous objection to being compared to other artists. Don't you in any way feel related to any other man's work?

No, I feel related to no one, it can't be put like that. But people are always making these comparisons, especially with *8½*, and then they expect statements from me about the differences. They ask me a lot of questions about Proust, about Joyce, even about Dante. I find it very mortifying each time, and especially with this film, to have to make declarations and to admit my ignorance. But I must finally come out and say something, because I see that the critics, by making this kind of comparison, tend to diminish the originality of one's work. I feel I have to say, then, that I have not read Proust, that I have not read Joyce . . . that I don't know a thing. I feel a grudge against this depressing habit of the critics, this way of tagging everything for their own convenience. And, much worse, it is also mortifying for the author they quote, because when they cite Proust in connection with *8½* I can say, sincerely, that I have not read him, which can be believed or not. But how can Proust defend himself . . . ? The great spirits, the great authors, go beyond the pages of their books. The true

being of men of culture, of men who make culture, exists also in the meat they eat and the air they breathe and in the eyes of the people they meet. Thus to say, ah, so and so recalls Proust, is to deny Proust a validity which extends beyond his work. And, you know, there is no need to engage in this vivisection of Proust or Joyce or Picasso. It is not necessary to have read books or to have seen paintings: life by now is conditioned by these works; they are the spirit of the time. So it is enough to live.

Isn't there something more to being a contemporary artist than just being able to feel the times? What makes an artist, besides sensitivity?

I can't answer that. But I can give you examples. For one, I believe deeply in artists from the provinces, because their cultural formation always takes place under the sign of fantasy—under a pressure which, held back and suppressed by silence and immobility, develops in a fantastic vein, as a dream-like quality, which is the greatest wealth an artist can have . . . That is why I was so pleased when Rossellini called *La Dolce Vita* the film of a provincial man. For me that is the most beautiful definition, because the position of the artist faced by today's reality should indeed be that of a provincial: to be attracted by what he sees, but to maintain the detachment of the provincial. After all, an artist is like a provincial always, finding himself between a physical and a metaphysical reality. Confronted by a metaphysical reality, we are all provincials. And who is really a citizen of transcendence? Only saints. The delicate space between the worlds of the tangible and the intangible is the space of the artist. It is there that he reigns.

Did you feel, though, that in order to be able to work in films, you had to live away from the provinces? You were born in Rimini, on the Adriatic, and when you decided to make films . . .

I didn't come to Rome to make films. I sort of happened into the cinema; I don't even think I've had teachers. Rossellini was a fundamental influence, because it was when I worked with him that I understood that for me the cinema was not only my best way of expression, but the way of life I liked best. It so happens that for me, with my laziness and my curiosity, film-making—that is, relating my melancholy, my stories—is really the form which suits my temperament best.

Do you think a film-maker has to be a special kind of man?

Another question that begs a dogmatic answer. I don't know. The cinema is very much like the circus; and in fact, if it didn't exist, I might well have become a circus director. The circus, too, is an exact mixture of technique, precision and improvisation. While the rehearsed spectacle is on, you are still taking risks: that is, simultaneously you live. I love this way of creating and living at the same time, without the limits set to a writer or a painter, through being plunged into action.

Is action then a creative criterion?

Definitions in art are meaningless; tags belong on suitcases. The question is really this: whether the one who at a certain moment wants to describe reality to others is capable of interpreting it first. Because if he isn't, he may as well not start. There is no use putting on film something that already existed before we arrive. That is why I feel that in art all means are permissible, and why I am so fond of film-makers who are men of spectacle, a mixture of magician and juggler, of prophet and clown, of salesman and priest.

What is the cinema? It is an attempt to put certain fantasies in order and to relate them with a certain precision. For me, film-making is really a way of living; it contains all the facts of my life. I could never say, for example, that one aspect is

more important to me than another, or that I like one film of mine better than another. It's all part of me; I wouldn't know how to choose. But action, or even feeling, is not enough; I don't agree that *anything* can be film material. I don't agree, for instance, with the old neo-realist doctrine that film-making is an act of humility towards life. Of course I feel humble towards the life-process, but when I get to the camera, this humility must be completely abandoned. In fact, one must become very strict, the complete master not only of the actors but of all the objects, all the light, everything . . . because really, if you extend this business of humility towards life to your work with the camera, there would no longer be any need for a film director . . .

There is so much more to reality than meets the eye. Take any landscape. There is the tangible, superficial aspect and there is the hidden, mysterious, spectral aspect. What I am interested in is showing the things behind the things, not just making statements on what can be seen. I'm often criticised for this: people say that I see reality deformed and fantasticated. But I think that everyone sees life around him in a more-than-superficial manner. What's the sense of being 'objective' in films? I don't even think it is physically possible.

I assume that this means you don't believe in the possibility of a man making a film 'from the outside': that is, as an observer, a documentarist, a travelling recorder?

I don't believe in going from place to place to make films, no. You know, an artist really speaks only his own language. He is like a tree which has put its roots down exactly where it was born. If he were transplanted, he would miss that vital nourishment, physical, physiological and spiritual, of his own tradition and culture . . . And don't forget; the things you grow up with, you know best, so that you feel most sure of them in case you are attacked. I think home is the place where a man has the best chance to express himself freely. Even if he is a modest artist, and even if he is limited by environment in the things he tries to express, these are more likely to be human things, things that really exist.

It seems to me that one of your principles is a unity of work and being. Would you go so far as to say that an artist should not treat anything but himself and his own life?

I would never say that. I simply feel that whatever he talks about, in whatever environment or time he places his story, it will probably be his own story . . . You know people say that *8½* is my own story; but it is not true in that direct autobiographical sense. My life is not so outstanding that I would ever consider making it the subject of a film. But I combine choreographic, scenographic, exterior aspects of situations that I am familiar with, and create a certain work, based on my experiences in life. And this is not unusual. Everybody, even an office clerk, in his work creates something out of his own experience. Therefore the relation between man and work, that is, the expression of yourself, is equal in every man. Also, as I said before, there are problems of the time, which are common to all. And, finally, there is the deep, metaphysical, transcendent aspect of your life, and that is something which concerns everybody.

Where does the story you want to tell usually originate?

Mostly it isn't even a story: it is more of an idea, a feeling. I don't want to have anything precise and definite at the start. I wouldn't take a trip that is all pre-arranged and pre-scheduled, either. It would be no fun. I guess that what really happens is an internal process. It's a vague, confused whisper, a new little light in the darkness, which announces a new game, a new round. It must be very carefully nourished or it will

disappear, go out. So what I do is try to prepare everything for its future growth. I pamper it, make it comfortable, encourage it without pushing it too hard, make it feel wanted like a domestic animal. And slowly, slowly, it takes shape, until finally it actually takes possession of my body, makes itself at home in me, leads me on. Then, when work starts, when things crystallise, this thing lives me. No, no. I am not making a grammatical mistake. I am lived by my film. *Sono vissuto*. I swing in a rhythm in which I am carried by my creation; I am happy, healthy, never tired, never hungry. All I have to do is work, work and make love. And so I can do everything in a very gay way. . .

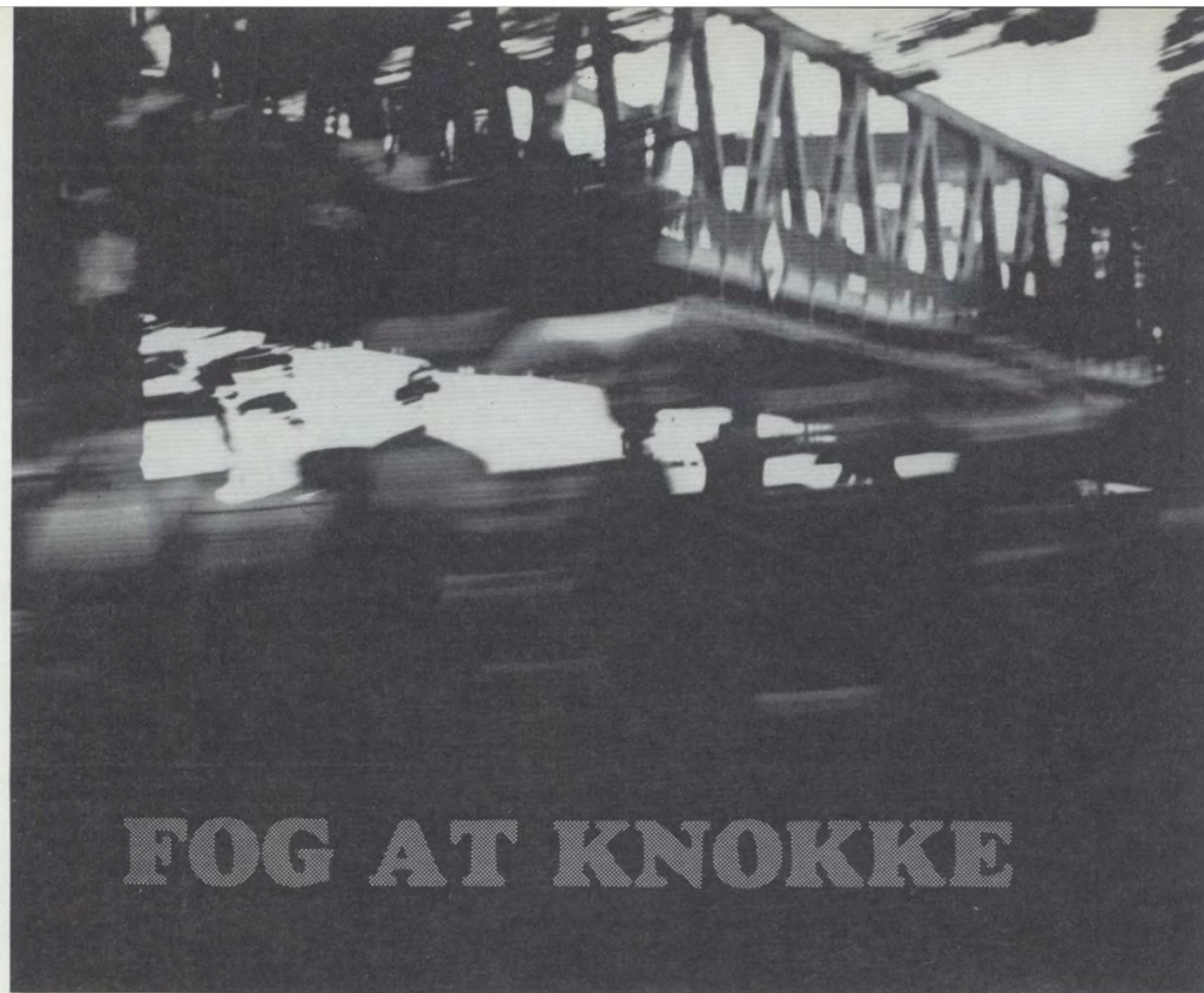
When the picture is finished, I have a sort of crisis: the happy, magic life ends, and I am again alone with all my real problems—God, wife, women, money, taxes—all things I have to resolve by myself. Sometimes I feel very badly indeed at that moment. I don't seem to be really living. My work helps me to be able to go on, to pass the weeks, the months. And it is often like a mirror for me, with which I can conduct a certain dialogue. It is my way of conducting the search into myself, although I don't expect to find any absolute solutions. In fact I hope I never do. What would I do with a solution? Isn't this the sense of life, this searching, searching . . .?

I think, for me, my films are ideal, in the sense that they are all about things within myself, and that I have built them around ideas which enchant me most. I always try to tell the stories that seem to me the most urgent, and I have been very lucky in being able to make the films I wanted to make. And so what has happened is that each of my stories is really a season of my life. Perhaps that is why I am sometimes thrown by criticism: I feel that my innermost being, and not just my work, is being judged and attacked, because I feel this total identity, this complete unity, between myself and my work.

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FEDERICO FELLINI.





FOG AT KNOCKE

ELLIOTT STEIN

FOUR HUNDRED PEOPLE ASSEMBLED near a bleak stretch of sand on the North Sea during last Christmas holidays seemed to be acting out some inexplicable "do-it-yourself" Marienbad game. The outside world did not exist; Knocke itself, its deserted hotels and beach buried in an impenetrable peasoup fog, did not exist—guests felt stranded for all eternity in the vast vessel of the Casino, a sort of *Outward Bound* type ocean liner of the 1930s in which strange shapes moved on the ballroom screen. Figures emerged after a daily ten or twelve hours of projections into a specially constructed "Labyrinth" of stainless steel, wire mesh and shifty light patterns which led (or did not lead) to the "room behind the mirror" where strange confabulations on the limits to which music, fiction, films, forms could be "pushed" were being held in several languages. After a day or so, a handful of guests wandered out into the fog and were not seen or heard from again. During an unforgettable final night, those who remained witnessed scenes of disorder and violence unprecedented at any film festival. Some were awarded prizes; a corner of the fog began to lift; and muffled shapes, freed from the spell, departed singly, few in pairs, back to New York, Paris, Tokyo, Caracas.

* * *

A dozen of the 107 entries were full-blooded films of marked individuality. Many of the others involved abstract blemishes, jam spots directly applied, or insect wings directly crushed and dabbed on the film strip itself—or else were directed by and starred that international polyheaded fiend, "The Avant-Garde Monster". This blubbery Gorgon was often an American or Canadian adolescent (age 30 to 40), sometimes

an old Czech or a young Danish girl. But whatever his outward form, he was immediately discernible by the way his eyes leered in close-up, his heart hammered on the sound track as he skulked about (often in negative) contemplating suicide through the deserted streets of large cities, through littered fairgrounds, under indifferent bridges, in natural history museums (in 4 films: new dinosaur age approaching because of the Bomb); talking to clothing store mannequins (lack of communication—5 films); indulging in self-abuse (3 films) or in self-pity (70 films). All of them were submerged in a riot of meaningless camera panting, panning and tracking (read a deadly fear of looking at things squarely). None are worth further discussion.

The Grand Prix of \$5,000 (donated by the Gevaert company) went to Ferdinand Khittl's *Parallelstrasse*, a 95-minute German film. A cold but fascinating work, it is an elaborate code which is never broken: during three nights, five men have volunteered to draw conclusions about the personality of a mysterious expatriate on whom they have been submitted a series of unrelated film documents shot in various exotic countries. The five cannot come to a satisfactory conclusion; they do not realise that they will be executed, as have been other volunteers who failed. This curious and precisely constructed conundrum is evocative of James Bond pinned to an armchair trying to make some sense out of a Raymond Roussel novel.

Prizes also went to Stan Van Der Beek's *Breathdeath* (U.S.A.) and Gregory Markopoulos' *Twice a Man* (U.S.A.)—both of great merit. The first, a Pop Art fantasy based on a 15th-century Dance of Death woodcut, is an apocalyptic

collage in which Carole Lombard, the atomic bomb, Marilyn Monroe and an animated cast of hundreds go through some very disturbing Doomsday gyrations, to an excellent musical score by Jay Watt. Markopoulos was the revelation of the Festival, his film the most "beautiful" and fully controlled of all. *Twice a Man* is a retelling of the Hippolytus legend, and was shot in New York. It is a tightly-packed hour-long mood piece in colour about a young man's visit to his mother, who has summoned him to request that he break off a homosexual relationship. Here was to be found the only real renewal of narrative form seen at Knokke, by use of a very personal conception of stream-of-consciousness which Markopoulos calls "film clusters". Dialogue is composed of isolated words and phrases making no logical independent sense, but reinforcing and flavouring the stunningly edited sequences. The film fuses the subjective reality of three different minds (Paul, his mother, his lover) into unchronological sequences of great emotional clarity, and is often reminiscent of Resnais' *Muriel*.

All of the entries from Japan were marked by intensity and formal beauty. Donald Richie's *Futari*, a feature-length investigation of a love affair between an older European woman and a younger Japanese man, is a series of the most subtle plastic compositions, but less successful than his haunting short study of childhood savagery, *War Games*. Takahiko Iimura's *Onan* is a strange shocker, and Kazutomo Fuzino's *An Eater* a startling fantasy about a waitress who works in a restaurant patronised by gluttons. While serving, she daydreams that she is undergoing an operation: from her stomach unreels an endless parade of comestibles, a face baked into a pie, customers (and what they have eaten), until all are bound together by a giant noodle.

Other inventive and successful entries were: Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising*, a love-hate poem about America's black leather-jacketed motorcyclists; Antony Balch's galvanic *Towers Open Fire*; Philippe Durand's baroque catalogue of teratology, *L'Annonciation*; Dahlmann's 27 minutes, 45 seconds; Maurice Ammar's exquisite *Concerto Flamenco*; Howard Kaplan's witty *Thanks a Lot*; Jean-Charles Meunier's animated *Banishing*, the festival's only hilariously funny work. Worst of the 107, and perhaps the most foolish film made anywhere in recent years, was Jean-Daniel Pollet's *Méditerranée*. A slag-heap of misunderstood Resnais, a sort of travelogue *Mariénbad*, it repeats exactly the same six shots over and over again in different order for nearly an hour, accompanied by a commentary by Philippe Sollers composed of phrases of that uniquely pretentious and meaningless bosh of which only scribblers in French literary magazines have the gift.

* * *

Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* was the Festival's *bête noire*, and a special film *maudit* ("cursed film") prize had to be invented in an attempt to exorcise it. A monumental orgy of male transvestites, often stylish in a Mary Pickford-Maria Montez fashion, it goes on far too long. Since genitals are to be viewed in it, the authorities, although recognising the film's "aesthetical and experimental" qualities, decided that Belgian law could not permit its screening. Whereupon Jonas Mekas, chief spokesman of New York's "Film Underground" movement, dramatically resigned from the jury, and telegrams started pouring in from U.S. cineastes, demanding that their films be withdrawn as a sign of solidarity with Smith.

In spite of the ban, *Creatures* enjoyed a solid week's run in Mekas' hotel room, with midnight screenings every night. But this was not enough for the editor of *Film Culture*, who was determined to make a test case of a public screening, and if necessary risk prison to draw attention to the need for a breakthrough in censorship. On New Year's Eve, festival-goers had the choice of two concurrent all night attractions: a beer and bloodsausage party in the Casino's downstairs cabaret, and an *hors concours* screening of the first six hours of Andy Warhol's 8-hour film, *Sleep*. Mekas and aides planted a print

of *Creatures* between the reels of *Sleep*, and were endeavouring to get it on the screen when a festival executive entered and pulled out the projector plug. Mekas tried to overpower him and called out for help from "all those present who believe in the freedom of the screen." At this point, the alerted director of the Casino ordered the main switch shut off and the huge building was plunged into complete darkness for several minutes. When the lights shot on again, M. Pierre Vermeulen, Belgian Minister of Justice, made a dramatic entrance into the *salle*. He delivered a curt lecture in praise of free expression and boasted that there was no censorship in Belgium. "In fact, we are the only country in the world with no film censor." But some films could not be shown—those which existing "jurisprudence" might tax as "outrages against decency." He personally considered Smith's film both "pornographic and inartistic." And that was that.

During the festival, the authorities had proudly seized on every occasion to boast of the lack of censorship in Belgium. That this is illusory is evident to anyone from the outside world who spends a little time movie-going in Brussels or Antwerp. A sampling: *The Nutty Professor* is shown with its most important sequence (the entire transformation scene) cut; *Guns in the Afternoon* is shown with the remarkable wedding sequence cut out. The films have not been "censored", merely shortened for everyone so that infants can be admitted; moreover films from other countries, Japan for instance, are imported from France and thus the Belgian prints have already been scissored by French censors and distributors. All the shots and scenes cut out of films in Belgium are deposited at the Royal Film Archives in Brussels, where if edited end to end they would constitute a fascinating 100-hour feature. Yet "There is no censorship."

* * *

The peculiar days at Knokke enforced a few lessons:—*Cinéma-vérité* is an approach, not a moral issue. Like colour or black and white, small screen or Scope, it depends on how it is used and what it is used to say: it is neither the "only hope of the cinema" nor "the death of the cinema", as extremists would have one believe. All the "Living Cameras" in the world can be turned at once on *Susan Starr*: when the hands behind them are as insensitive the result is deadly boredom; on the other hand, the rawest of everyday material when approached by an artist like Bill Klein (*Gare de Lyon*) can add up to an exciting statement about some aspect of contemporary life.

—The United States (which sent 143 films to the pre-selection jury, more than for all the other countries combined) currently seems to be the only centre of an authentic non-academic school of experimental cineastes. The general picture is one of frenetic confusion and lack of discipline—above all a lack of "film culture"—dotted by a handful of courageous personalities who seem to know who they are and what they are trying to do. In spite of widespread slovenliness, the excitement and energy are there; and therefore also the promise.

—The previous competition had been in 1958. Five years is too long a period for a single festival to cover. Sanity and critical standards cannot survive ten hours of avant-garde films a day, eight days running. Freaks and amateurs notwithstanding, there is enough good work being done in the field to necessitate a biennial experimental festival.

But some *modus vivendi* will have to be reached with the censorship pest—perhaps along the lines of the temporary truce achieved by the organisers of last year's New York festival, where local restrictive laws were suspended. Whatever one thinks of the merits of *Flaming Creatures* or the advisability of Mekas' commando tactics, it is evident that an international festival (especially one which has as goal the encouragement of works which "regenerate or extend the film as a medium of expression") cannot limit the fare presented to its invited group of consenting adults only to those films acceptable to local laws designed to regulate "family spectacles".

FILM CLIPS

EVERY NOW AND THEN, in conversation or looking through old reports of film festivals, the question inevitably comes up: whatever happened to such-and-such a film? It won awards at Cannes or Venice, it was enthusiastically noticed by a lot of critics, and yet for some reason it never came out in Britain. Why? To a certain extent one can guess at reasons: often no doubt it is straight finance, with producer and potential British distributor unable to agree on a possible advance guarantee; sometimes it will simply be taste—the man who might acquire it just doesn't like it; there may be severe censorship troubles looming; or sometimes the film may be obscurely the property of a major Hollywood company which had a financial stake in it and now really does not know what to do with it. This last reason is generally of negligible importance, though at the moment we are likely to be particularly conscious of it because among the pictures Twentieth Century-Fox bought up to tide them over their dearth of product were such films as Chabrol's *Landru*, *L'Amour à Vingt Ans*, *La Viaccia* and *Long Day's Journey into Night*, none of which, seemingly, they are finding it easy to distribute through their normal channels in this country.

This special problem apart, though, what precisely is keeping us from seeing over here, for example, *The Exterminating Angel*, *La Baie des Anges*, *Une Femme est une Femme*, *Les Godelureaux*, any film of Michel Deville, most films of Jean-Pierre Melville (particularly *Bob le Flambeur* and *Le Doulos*), *Rogopag*, *Il Demonio*, early Antonioni like *Cronaca di un Amore* and *La Signora senza Camelie*, any Ozu but *Tokyo Story*, promised but as yet unseen, *Farewells*, *Lotna*, the Trnka *Midsummer Night's Dream* . . . ? The list could be extended indefinitely, but even as it stands it is varied enough in all conscience, and long enough to give one grounds for enquiry. So armed with it, I set out to question several of our leading continental distributors and see if I could pin any of them down to precise reasons.

The enquiry, as you might imagine, involved a considerable amount of diplomacy, and ran up against several regular snags, the chief being a general unwillingness to say flatly in any particular case that it was just because the producers wanted too large an advance for distribution rights to their film. On two or three occasions it was suggested that the

producers would be 'offended' if accused of this; in other cases the distributors said they were still interested but waiting for the price to go down, and would meanwhile rather not specify. One distributor, Mr. Cooper of Contemporary, said that his usual practice if a reasonable figure could not be reached was to wait two or three years until it had got reasonable. But he added that "by that time you often don't want to buy the film anyway; it's old, the director has passed on to better things, it's not in the news any more, people want to see newer films," and suggested that something of this sort had happened to them with *Nazarin* and *Le Petit Soldat*, which had both suffered from a timelag of a couple of years. Mr. Pallanca of Connoisseur agreed that older films were difficult to market for this reason, but said it was much more the exhibitors who insisted on having absolutely the latest than the public.

On other matters than money the distributors were more forthcoming. *La Baie des Anges* everyone was rather vague about. No, they hadn't seen it; who was in it, who directed? *Une Femme est une Femme* Mr. Rive of Gala thought had been acquired by someone else, Mr. Cooper didn't like and thought very doubtful commercially over here, and Mr. Pallanca didn't like and thought had been superseded by Godard himself so that it was too late now anyway. Deville Mr. Rive said would need to be dubbed if Gala were to touch it at all, since comedy was very dodgy unless, as with Clair, it had a built-in cultural selling point or, like Tati, it had very little important dialogue; Mr. Cooper had not seen any and had been advised against it by someone in the British Film Institute whom he had consulted (such faith is really rather touching!); Mr. Pallanca didn't like any Deville film he had seen. Melville Mr. Rive didn't think much of ("No better than the Hollywood equivalent") and anyway he thought that the N.F.T. retrospective had taken off the cream of the public; Mr. Pallanca said it was too late for *Bob le Flambeur*, which otherwise he thought quite interesting; Mr. Cooper rather liked Melville's films, but felt that they came in that awkward category of the quite good, quite interesting for which, in the present shortage of specialised cinemas in London, there really just wasn't room.

The only opinions offered on *Rogopag* and *Il Demonio* were that they would have too much trouble with the censor to be worth the effort. Mr. Rive said that Gala had lost so much on East European films in early days that he now looked askance at anything but the occasional Polish film (great filmgoers, the London Poles), while he regarded all Japanese directors except Kurosawa as bad risks commercially. As for the early Antonioni, opinions differed strikingly. Mr. Rive said that they had considered the possibility of bringing them over at the height of the Antonioni cult, but as far as he remembered the rights had been in such a tangle they had given up. Mr. Cooper wondered whether British distributors were sufficiently aware at the time that these films existed. It was left to Mr.



JEAN-PAUL BELMONDO IN MELVILLE'S "LE DOULOS".

Pallanca to inject a little hard practicality into things by pointing out that though almost everything Bergman ever made was bought up at the time of Bergman's greatest vogue, most of the distributors who bought the early films at inflated prices got burnt, because all that most people wanted to see were the major later films. Hence, when a similar situation came up with Antonioni, everybody knew better. Anyway, he added, you never gained much by digging up early works of people now famous: the critics only said how interesting they were for the specialist, and promptly put everyone else off.

And in all this, what about that squalid old basic, money? Nobody would say anything definite, except that it seemed generally agreed that the difficulties over *The Exterminating Angel* were essentially financial. So perhaps it will be some time before we see it, and perhaps when we do it will already be too late for us to appreciate it in the proper perspective—which would be a great pity. Certainly for the most part the distributors seem to know very clearly why they have not imported what they haven't; and on the whole their reasons seem reasonable enough. The main mystery that remains is why they have imported what they have; but that is a question much too involved and inscrutable to take on here and now. Perhaps some other time?

* * *

I LAST RAN INTO STANLEY DONEN shortly after seeing *Charade* for the first time. Well, 'ran into' is perhaps hardly the *mot juste*: I went to see him while he was trapped in bed for a couple of weeks with the producer-director's main occupational hazard, a duodenal ulcer, and was not likely, as is usually the case, to be dashing off in all directions at the slightest provocation. Naturally we talked about *Charade*, then poised between its successful New York première and its no doubt equally successful appearance in London. I had, in fact, enjoyed it very much, and was able in all honesty to say so, though I did tentatively suggest that perhaps it might be, well, just a teeny, weeny bit leisurely in its development. Mr. Donen seemed wounded by this. He had, it appeared, tightened it up by no less than nine minutes since the first preview simply by speeding up the editing, and removing scarcely a single line of dialogue; moreover, the New York critics mostly seemed to have thought it rushed by much too fast, so that they could hardly catch the plot. (Which may, of course, tell us more about the New York critics than about the film; however . . .)

What really worried Mr. Donen, though, was the American advertising for the film. "You know, since I have been a producer-director I have been able to get a vital say in everything except the advertising. It seems ridiculous that after all you do to get the film just the way you want, it is handed over to the people who devise the advertising and they can, and often do, sabotage everything you've been doing by trying to sell the film as something it is not, luring in people who won't like it and putting off those it was intended for. In the States *Charade* is advertised with Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn smiling vacuously at each other across the poster as though it's some Thirties domestic comedy, and with the selling line 'Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn in *Charade*—Who could ask for anything more?' My immediate reaction is, who couldn't? What about moviegoers who hate Cary Grant or Audrey Hepburn or both, and would rather see Doris Day and/or Rock Hudson? What about people who would rather see them in a wild farce or a very sudsy romantic drama? What I really want—and what we're going to have over here—is a poster which doesn't 'sell' the film at all, but simply announces that it is on and who is in it, and gives some sort of simple graphic indication that it is a comedy thriller. Then people know what they're buying."

Donen—and it is very refreshing these days, when every film-maker tends to be primed, ready for French interviewers, with his personal philosophy—sees himself simply as an entertainer, making films which he finds amusing and has some reason to suppose other people will find amusing too.



MYLENE DEMONGEOT AND JACQUES CHARRIER IN MICHEL DEVILLE'S COMEDY "A CAUSE, A CAUSE D'UNE FEMME".

"We all make mistakes, of course. *The Grass is Greener* was one; now that really is slow. And I guess *Surprise Package* was another: I thought, and still think, that it was a funny idea rather well handled by the three stars, but everyone else, critics and public, absolutely hated it, so obviously I was wrong. If you think you have a message, at least you can comfort yourself when you have a flop with the thought that the public is just not ready for it. But if you make films to entertain the public and they are not entertained, there is no way out but to admit you miscalculated and try to do better next time. That is partly why I like to keep making films—I try to make one a year or at least every eighteen months. It keeps your hand in and stops you worrying too much about how every film has to be a masterpiece or at least an enormous box-office success. Because it really doesn't, you know: a flop, even today, isn't the end of the world. You may find it a little more difficult getting money for the next film after a flop. But somehow the money comes from somewhere, and films go on being made."

* * *

DONEN PREFERS CINEMA ADVERTISING which doesn't attempt a hard sell on the product. Even he, one imagines, would not advocate advertising which actually sets determinedly about putting the customer off. But this is precisely what the Jacey circuit have been doing in London recently with what had previously been one of their staple commodities, the nudist film. Their nudies have been moved from the Continental-type cinemas like the Cinephone in which they previously played at prices from 5s. upwards, to the Jacey string of news and cartoon theatres, where they play more than twice as many performances a day (up to ten, instead of the three or four of the normal West End cinema) at normal news-theatre prices, 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. Moreover, they have been sold, if that is the word, in their new locations with such lines as "Frankly patrons they're a bore, so why pay more?" "Nudist films are so popular! Why?" and "Thousands have paid 9s. 6d. to see this film. Was it worth it?"

Well, all publicity is good publicity, they say, and there is
(Continued on page 102)



YASUJIRO OZU by CHISHU RYU

Yasujiro Ozu died in December, 1963, aged 60. We are grateful to Mr. Chishu Ryu, leading actor in almost all his films since the war, for sending us these reminiscences.

AS I ENTERED THE FILM WORLD in 1925 and Mr. Ozu became a director in 1927, I was given chances to appear in almost all his films, except *Bijin Aishu* (*The Beauty's Sorrow*, 1931), a silent film, and *Shukujo wa Nanio Wasuretake* (*What Did the Lady Forget?*, 1937), a talkie. For the first few years I was given only bit parts, and it was in 1930 with the film *Rakudai wa Shitakeredo* (*I Flunked, But . . .*) that I played rather an important part for the first time. After that, I was lucky enough to have important parts in five of his pre-war films; and in his other films he never failed to give me the chance to appear in a few shots as a bit-player. After the war, as you

know, I was cast as leading man in almost all his films.

As to Mr. Ozu's way of direction, he had made up the complete picture in his head before he went on the set, so that all we actors had to do was to follow his directions, from the way we lifted and dropped our arms to the way we blinked our eyes. That is, we hadn't to worry about our acting at all. In a sense, we felt quite at home when we were playing in his pictures. Even if I did not know what I was doing and how those shots would be connected in the end, when I looked at the first screening I was often surprised to find my performance far better than I had expected. He paid this minute attention not only to the actors' performances but also to stage settings and properties, and sometimes even painted appropriate pictures on the sliding doors used for the set. Therefore, what was called Mr. Ozu's production was, I think, the film produced by himself.

Kenji Mizoguchi's way was quite the opposite of Mr. Ozu's. He just gave hints to the actors, who had to make every effort to obtain the best effect, whereas Mr. Ozu worked over his ideas in advance from the beginning to the end and fixed each actor into each shot.

Mr. Ozu was very strict and seemed not to be satisfied unless he worked up to the finish. Although I used to be a poor actor and was often quite at a loss as to how to play my part, he gave me hearty encouragement so long as I could exactly follow his directions. Since my clumsiness was well known throughout the studio, when my turn came on the set all the staff used to switch off the lights and go out. Mr. Ozu and I were left alone on the set, and he would let me rehearse tirelessly, giving me every sort of advice until at last I could somewhat manage to do as I was expected to. Even then the final shots were not always successful. Naturally I was disappointed and afraid that he would never use me again, but, to my surprise, he picked me out in his next picture. I can't thank him too much for this consideration for someone whom, I believe, no other director would have chosen to use because of his clumsiness.

In *Daigaku Yoitoko* (*College is a Nice Place*, 1936), I played a college boy; and in the next picture, *Hitori Musuko* (*The Only Son*), Mr. Ozu asked me to play an old man. Although I did my best in making up for this part, every device turned out to be a failure. Mr. Ozu happened to be on the set. He called me in, and with a few touches from my make-up things succeeded in a moment in producing a wonderful figure of an old man. I must confess that I felt then as if I were only the paints or some other materials with which Mr. Ozu painted pictures.

Although we were much of the same age, when we were travelling together or drinking *sake* (of which he was very fond) after the completion of a picture, he seemed to be my real father. Mr. Ozu looked happiest when he was engaged in writing a scenario with Mr. Kogo Noda, at the latter's cottage on the tableland of Nagano Prefecture. By the time he finished writing a script, after about four months' effort, he had already made up every image in every shot, so that he never changed the scenario after we went on the set. The words were so polished up that he would not allow us even a single mistake.

He told me that he was happiest when a scenario was completed. He also told me in jest that he had often been disappointed to find those images broken as he cast the parts and went on the set. He was always ready to go location-hunting and walked the narrow lanes and back streets all day long in search of the places which would best fit his images. He was such a good walker and had such enthusiasm that the cameramen, who accompanied him, used to be tired out first.

And once a film was completed, even if the actors' performances were poor, Mr. Ozu never complained of it. Even when we were sure that he must have had complaints in his mind, he took all the responsibilities on himself and never spoke of them to others. This, alone, gives one some idea of his character.

FILM REVIEWS

LE JOLI MAI

CHRIS MARKER IS A POET, a Metaphysical poet in the strict sense of Doctor Johnson's definition: he yokes together the most heterogeneous ideas. Raw actuality and the most polished literary arabesques; a socialism infused with Popular Front fervour and a Left Bank aestheticism which sometimes verges on tweezeness. Doctor Johnson complained about the violence with which disparates were yoked together by the Metaphysicals; we have made a similar criticism when we have complained in the past about the over-playfulness in some of Marker's work. But with *Le Joli Mai* (Contemporary) he has made a film as comprehensive and lucid as a Donne poem; and like the best of Donne, the film's audacities and conceits are welded into one by the freedom of its creator's personality.

"Pour faire du cinéma, il suffit de filmer des gens libres," says Godard. Marker's film is about free people in Paris in May, 1962, "the first spring of peacetime." The Evian agreements had wound up the Algerian war in 1961: the last cries of France's long-drawn-out colonial agony echoed into *le joli mai*. But the country had come out of the dark tunnel, and new hopes were in the air. It was the month in which the final ritual obsequies, absurd and tragic—the last indignant demonstrations, the obligatory civic martyrs, the scandalous acquittal of Salan—had to be played out. After the deluge, the future was waiting; and Marker launched into his first full-length film to capture the grimaces of the past and the beckoning of things to come.

Le Joli Mai opens with a presentation of what is and always shall be: the city itself, Paris perceived in a panorama of rooftop landscapes, tranquil telephotos of distant crawling traffic, and Simone Signoret speaking a rich, tender eulogy by Giraudoux. Dull would he be of sight who could pass by such choice Olympian images. But Marker tweaks us out of this detachment into the first of his interviews—with a street-corner clothing salesman whose nervous, machine-gun answers and obsession with "getting money in the till" set the rhythm of a whole set of characters who are driven by the city, whose very mannerisms, the way they use their hands, where their eyes go, betray their compulsive adaptation to its life.

These are the unfree people: the slum-dwellers in Aubervilliers (we see old people washing in the street while a commentator quotes an advertisement for luxury flats with Carrara marble facias); the two fifteen-year-old apprentice stockbrokers already apeing the opinions of their elders; crabbed chauvinists outside the Bourse; the well-dressed caterpillars of the literary set releasing ceremonial doves from the roof of a posh apartment to celebrate a poetry prize; an inventor consumed with vanity; an uproarious lower-middle-class wedding party where all the guests are at least twenty years older than the married couple, and a great grainy close-up shows us the bride wincing at all the forced fun. *La mort saisit le vif*.

But Marker gives *le vif* its due. His interviewers deftly force the most pompous pundit to reveal his insufficiencies. And what the interviewers can't achieve, Marker looks after. The sequence outside the Bourse is shot with the utmost insolence, the camera wandering off into the crowd which has gathered to watch the interview, picking out a man who looks like Bernard Berenson and snatching an individual with cigar and dark glasses who's muttering "They shouldn't be allowed to interview minors." "Stop," says Marker, and sets up a new sequence (complete with clapper-board) in which the grumbler can give his point of view. Later, while the inventor is pontificating about Will and Success, the camera latches on to a daddy-long-legs crawling across his shirt, and once more Marker has used his aliveness to the instant moment to make a comment.

And the poet in Marker sets against this parade of stereotypes moments of liberation—the overjoyed mother who has just been given a council flat showing it to her children for the first time; the

woman in the slum who has stuck plastic flowers into her garden: "I put them in the garden until the others come up." The first part of the film ends with a soldier and his girl on a bridge, holding hands, scarcely daring to speak, their eyes lowered and their words hesitant, he incredibly young-looking, she like someone out of a Thirties Carné film. "We believe in eternal happiness," says the soldier. But we know he must go to Algeria tomorrow, and can only see them as vulnerable, defenceless against the great events of the time.

Part Two thrusts us into the thick of these public events, and we begin to see why the interviewers of Part One have harped so much on questions of political apathy and solidarity. A series of sharp Brechtian flashes show us *le plastiquage*, a police charge on February 8 which crushed eight people to death in the Métro, the half-million mourners at their funeral, the triumph of Salan, a railwaymen's strike, a strike at Renault's. In this part of the film Marker achieves a kind of anthropological quality, cutting newsreel-like shots of public events against two extraordinary dance sequences, which present the Madison and the Twist as danced in Paris night-clubs. Here Michel Legrand's music, discordant as Thelonius Monk, pungently alienates the dancing, making us watch it like the rites of some strange tribe. This provides a poetic moment of summary, like the stills sequence in *Cuba Sil*, which asks: "What was the rest of the world talking about at this time? About people, countries, fabulous animals, about Algeria, France, America, space, time . . ." with Gagarin's face illustrating "space" and Eichmann's, "time."

After such a summary the longer interviews with truly free people—"people free to question, to refuse, to undertake"—are all the more striking. Marker shows us two consulting engineers who voice one of the film's main themes: "our dreams are too small for what already exists." Even here, Marker can't resist an affectionate send-up, punctuating their more way-out pronouncements with shots of his beloved cats. (One pussy is poised deliciously after a particularly pedantic double subjunctive.) We meet a wonderfully confident and humorous student from Dahomey who tells us with a great big smile on his face what a Negro in Paris feels like. Only his hands, which the camera watches clenched and striking the table, show the depth of feeling beneath the charm. The hands of the worker-priest who became a Communist militant, however, are open and accepting. Most disturbing of all is the Algerian worker who has stubbornly struggled through to his freedom against racialism and

OPENING SEQUENCE OF "LE JOLI MAI".





"THE LIZARDS".

brutality. The effort shows on him; he has only an icy, solitary freedom.

Marker draws back to sum up. He gives us a resting-point in the form of a speeded-up traffic sequence which is perhaps the one thing in the film that is old-style metropolis angst, but he rises to a superb lyrical epilogue, centred on Fresnes prison. Here Marker reveals that the whole film has been an attempt to see Paris as if through the eyes of a newly-released prisoner. All Marker's pre-occupations—the future, the cosmos, a shared happiness, a shared suffering, death, art—are stated here, against *Hiroshima*-type tracking shots through dawn streets. We can now see the core of feeling that enabled Marker to order all the actuality he compiled. For he has made what he set out to make: a call to freedom.

MICHAEL KUSTOW

THE LIZARDS

LINA WERTMÜLLER'S FIRST FILM is about life in one of those sleepy little Southern Italian towns picturesquely perched on a hillside, which the twentieth century has touched only superficially. The inhabitants, basking like lizards in the same sun that has baked the narrow streets for centuries, dart into the safe shadows of their homes at the first whisper of innovation—the small landowners preferring, for instance, their primeval and immobile independence to any new prosperity that might result from co-operative action. Lina Wertmüller sees the town as representing an attitude to life from which the young—in particular Antonio, Francesco and Sergio, three intelligent but ineffectual youths—cannot fully escape. Antonio, the notary's son (played by Toni Petrucci with a little too much spirit to make his spinelessness convincing), gets his chance when a cosmopolitan aunt carries him off to Rome, but he comes back, as an earlier scene had warned us that he would. (In that scene, he and his friends had been shown as so superstitiously parochial as to accept without amusement a young man's claim that he had been obliged to beat a retreat from Rome because someone at home had put the evil eye on him.) As the commentary—the detached voice of the place—puts it: "Our history and our surroundings make us so."

The remark could be applied to the film itself for, like so many of the current generation of Italian directors (Olmi, Pasolini, Rosi, Gregoretti, Zurlini), Lina Wertmüller is building on Italy's neo-realist history, and using as raw material the ambivalent face of a country that, in its infinitely varied sociology, is like a microcosm of the world. In the Italian cinema neo-realism is no longer an idea but an instinct, an inherited gift that, coupled with a good script, can scarcely produce a bad film. It is not therefore as surprising as it

would be anywhere else to find, in Italy, a new director who can perfectly evoke a way of life—especially when, like Lina Wertmüller, she can write her own quietly effective script. *The Lizards* (Contemporary) seems, in fact, so basically unassuming that it is very easy to fall into the error of regarding it as documentary instead of the very visual kind of drama that it is. One could scarcely make this mistake about Olmi's stylistically similar but infinitely more complex *I Fidanzati*. But Lina Wertmüller's personal contribution to a theme which at first glance seems very like that of *I Vitelloni* (she in fact worked with Fellini on *8½*) is less marked in that to some extent she is still feeling her way. It is, however, enough to point to the sequence which begins with an elderly woman committing suicide because her daughter-in-law has ousted her authority in the home. The woman climbs over her balcony railing and jumps to her death, despite the screams of a neighbour who had been calmly sewing in the window opposite. The film cuts to a long shot of the mourners leaving the cemetery, with thunder rumbling overhead. In pouring rain a bus winds its way into the town. The rain beats against the windows of the room where Sergio, the saddest and most nearly middle-aged of the three young men, disconsolately lounges. The door bursts open; Sergio is suddenly all joy; Antonio is back. Nothing could be further from documentary than this succession of images; nor is it symbolic except for those who like to think in symbols. To see it is, quite simply, to feel what the director wants to convey. The method might be described as impressionistic, and it is one which demands a cameraman as sensitive to visual nuances as the director herself.

Lina Wertmüller is certainly particularly fortunate in having the brilliant Gianni Di Venanzo, with his unique talent for dazzling whites, to capture the enervating beauty that complicates any preconceived attitude towards the south. Di Venanzo's camerawork always fits the mood. For the opening scenes at lunch and during siesta hour, the camera moves either in slow pans or not at all. When Francesco is making furtive advances to a peasant girl (it is the men and not the girls who fear being compromised), the camera enters joyfully into the spirit of intricate pursuit, swooping all over the place and catching the couple from every conceivable angle, including a fascinating vertical one; yet, in the manner of the south, its attention is easily distracted, so that even at the height of the chase it can turn away temporarily to tag on to a passer-by. All this exactly expresses the ephemeral enthusiasms of the south, for which Lina Wertmüller obviously has a kind of love-hate relationship. She shows, for instance, the bourgeois contempt for the peasantry and the claustrophobic class system as products not so much of viciousness as of the peasants' own rather disarming pride in being resigned to their inferior lot. Here nothing changes because no one has the energy to pursue anything wholeheartedly enough: flirtations with peasant girls always end in arranged marriages to someone like the chemist's fat and ugly daughter, and early ambitions are gently lulled to sleep. This is the mood for which Lina Wertmüller has tried to find visual expression, and there can be no doubt that she has succeeded. *The Lizards* may be a slight film, but it is a remarkably evocative one.

ELIZABETH SUSSEX

THE LEATHER BOYS

THE TITLE OF *THE LEATHER BOYS* (BLC/British Lion) is misleading. It suggests a film primarily concerned with young thuggery, with leather-jacketed gangs of ton-up boys, their girls pillioned behind them, tearing about aimlessly, spreading fear and disruption wherever they can. It suggests a British version of *The Wild One*. Indeed, in her pseudonymous novel which was the source of the film, Gillian Freeman described a good deal of this; yet, in working with Sidney Furie on the adaptation for the screen, she has allowed her original to be transformed. In the film all the violence has vanished, and even the many details of social documentation have become totally subservient to the creation of character. For the film is essentially a study of character, a minute and moving depiction of ruptured personal relationships, of the lost investments of misplaced love.

It begins confusingly, moving so rapidly through the courtship and marriage of young Reggie (Colin Campbell) and schoolgirl Dot (Rita Tushingham) that it is difficult to respond except on the level of caricature. The wedding, for example, is outrageously handled, with the entire party running for the London bus that will take them to the reception, where a staid band and little twisting girls contribute to the sense of fun. These opening sequences, with their CinemaScope close-ups and many rapid cuts, assault our senses in

a way that, although funny, is uneven preparation for the intimacies to come.

It is during the honeymoon at Bognor Regis that this stylistic assertiveness is at its most unsettling. On the one hand there is Dot, all dolled-up and peroxided (with Rita Tushingham's performance pushing the role well into the realm of caricature), twisting away to the trumpet excitements of the Butlin's holiday band; on the other, there is Reggie, discontentedly sulking in feeling excluded from his wife's determined gaiety, in feeling even betrayed by it, yet scarcely understanding his own discontent. It is not so much that he wants Dot to be more alone with him, as that he wants her to be less assertive than she is, less youthfully vulgar and fun-loving. He wants her to be more passive and acquiescent, more conventionally female, more, in fact, like Pete.

For it is when Pete (Dudley Sutton) appears on the scene that the film finds its style and the inward drama begins. On the surface, Pete too is extravagantly conceived: a jovial, extroverted prankster, with arms open wide in loving acceptance of the world he wanders through, yet with dark glasses and a leather jacket that help to hide the loneliness within. It is in the creation of this character (a total transformation from his counterpart in the original novel), and of his observed love for Reggie, that the central distinction of the film can be found. He seems very much a joint creation of director/writer/actor, not so much given as apparently inventing the freest lines in the film. "It's all in the mind, man!" he gesticulates in assurance to the uncertain Reggie that one can celebrate Guy Fawkes night when one is most in the mood. A fast-riding, always smiling individual, preferring the solitude of a rubbish-dump shared with his friend to the crowded comforts of a pub, jokingly tender with Reggie's Gran (Gladys Henson), he is most movingly concerned to please and to look after the confused and apathetic Reggie; to offer him the compassion and acceptance of a mother's love, which, we realise, is the kind of love he needs. So that at the end of the film, when Reggie, suddenly made aware by the middle-aged queers that he meets in a pub of the homosexual implications of his friendship with Pete, walks away from him with no more than a disgusted grimace, we feel a great injustice has been done. What will they do now, these two boys? Pete's hurt face registers the extent of his own sense of loss, but Reggie—always younger—seems unable to understand. Where is he going? Surely not back to Dot. By reminding us of the times he has felt closest to married love while dancing with Dot, the closing swell of the music ironically underlines for us the hopelessness of this predicament; but for Reggie himself there seems no solution. We are left with a sense of unbearable loneliness and grief.

It is difficult to describe accurately just how the film achieves this intimacy. Certainly, there is a lot of over-emphasis and some incredibility, as there is something old-fashioned about the way the film has been shot. For instance, there is a noticeable punctiliousness about text-book narrative devices—the couple approach the front door of a house; they enter; the camera tilts to an upstairs window; cut to the upstairs room, and so on—which gives a feeling of conventionality to the style. And yet, within these conventional trappings, and in spite of the over-emphasis, by the end of the film (as in *The Boys*, even as in the very primitive *A Dangerous Age*), we are left with the sense of having taken part in a most personal experience. It is this personal quality, this sense of intimacy, which, finally, is the achievement of Sidney Furie as a director.

PETER HARCOURT

LE SOUPIRANT and THE PINK PANTHER

THE CINEMA'S FIRST-LINE DEFENCE against television has in general been based on a new awareness of pictorial assets, which may be one explanation of the apparent revival of visual comedy in films. Another reason, of course, may be the rediscovery—through television and through retrospectives at the cinémathèques and the film festivals—of the great comics of the Golden Age. Or it may just be an understandable reaction against the comedy of situations, wadded in a fluff of chatter, that has survived as late as *Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed?* and *Move Over, Darling*. Whatever the causes, the revival seems pretty widespread. From Italy, we have had the Nino Manfredi episode of *L'Amore Difficile*, about a poker-faced little man's wordless adventure in a railway carriage with a big, voluptuous widow. From France, in the steps of Tati, we have had Pierre

Etaix's shorts. And in America Jerry Lewis has exploited his very personal slapstick in the series of films that began with *The Bell Boy* and has most recently produced *Who's Minding the Store?* and *The Nutty Professor* (which is sufficiently *outré* to have failed to get a release in this country).

Le Soupirant (Connoisseur) is Pierre Etaix's first feature. As in his shorts, he directs and scripts, as well as playing the main role. His admiration of Buster is if anything more apparent than his admiration of his actual master, Jacques Tati. It is almost too obvious to point out his likeness to Keaton. He is a small, sad, pale and neat young man. Many of his mannerisms are Keatonesque—none more so than the way that, having marched briskly into error, he marches equally briskly out of it, with a sharp U-bend. The very theme of his film is Keatonesque: the hero sets out to find romance not out of any amorous motive but dutifully, because his mother has told him to.

The motive of Etaix's comedy is the single-mindedness which blinkers him to consequences and alternatives. He plays footsie under the dance-hall table without considering that he may have the wrong foot. He offers to carry a girl's parcels without thinking that she may be carrying them for the fat old woman beside her. He loses his head over the image of a star without ascertaining that she is in reality a middle-aged woman with a grown-up son. His concentration is such that, rapt in watching television, he pours cream into the sugar basin and takes a bite out of his saucer; at a café table he puts his change in his coffee and pockets the sugar.

All this is, in its way, Keatonesque, and Etaix, you may be sure, knows it. The profound difference is that, behind Buster's mask and from time to time peeping through it, is a real human being, and the things that happen matter, have comic weight, because they are happening to him. With Etaix's little man you sense instead a highly ingenious brain and a quick fancy, engineering a wonderfully efficient comic machine. Significantly Etaix can as readily make other characters comic—the old father, the drunken lady, shrieking with laughter. Keaton's comic genius was characteristically confined to his own being. To say all of which is not so much to diminish the pleasures of *Le Soupirant* as to acknowledge that you do not get two Busters in one world.

The Pink Panther (United Artists) is one of a whole group of films—others are *The Prize* and *Charade*—which set out lightly to parody the conventions of the thriller movie. Blake Edwards, the writer-director, having recovered well from the *Days of Wine and Roses* disaster, has nicely pitched the film somewhere between *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *Grip of Fear*. David Niven is a gentleman jewel thief in a convenient partnership with the wife of the police inspector who is bent on bringing him to book; but the intrigues related to the theft of a famous jewel and the appearance of a rival burglar are agreeably irrelevant except in so far as they afford opportunity for a lot of very



"LE SOUPIRANT". PIERRE ETAIX AND LAURENCE LIGNERES.

elegant and rhythmical comedy which—if to a lesser degree than *Le Soupirant*—depends largely upon visual gags. The humour builds up from a restrained beginning, in which Capucine, as the policeman's wife, baffles the *gendarmierie* with a Keystone quick-change in a lift, to a high farce climax, with a match dropped into a firework dump at a masked ball.

Peter Sellers' gifts for slapstick have not often been so well used (too often he is exploited as a mimic instead of as a comedian). He is the police inspector, and the comic point of his character is the distinction between the meek cuckold and his own image of himself as a suburban Maigret. His gullibility goes with a classic awkwardness, a dreadful fatality which makes any doorhandle come off in his ham-fist. He even has a gag—with a spinning terrestrial globe—which seems not to have been foreseen by Mack Sennett. Unexpectedly seconding Sellers as a visual clown is Capucine. A classic beauty, she abandons all her elegance to the service of slapstick. Tumbling into wardrobes or slithering off beds from beneath importunate lovers, doubled up in paroxysmal double-take coughs or hiding men in her bubble-bath, she is the most endearing accession to the comic world since the late Kay Kendall.

DAVID ROBINSON

NOTHING BUT THE BEST

EVERY SO OFTEN a film comes along that makes one not only understand but envy the situation of Continental critics who seize on the most unlikely English-speaking films for praise largely because, evidently, they do not understand a word of the dialogue. *Nothing But the Best* (Warner-Pathé) is one such: its success lies almost entirely in the way it looks and moves; its deficiencies, though they press themselves on us with greater or lesser insistence from moment to moment, are nearly all traceable to the way it sounds.

The difficulty here is that the story Clive Donner is working from in his new film is very precisely situated in time and in social level: it chronicles the climb of an ambitious yob—his mentor's phrase—from the relative obscurity of junior clerk in a Mayfair property company to a partnership and marriage with the boss's daughter, all in a few short months. It is a lesson on how to succeed in business by really trying: our hero soon tumbles to the big secret in social and professional advancement—belonging to the right class and possessing the right background, or at least looking and sounding convincingly as though you do—and proceeds to acquire it by dint of study and the accumulated know-how of a confirmed public-school villain, who does it for a laugh and, it is half suggested, for the pleasure of deliberately destroying his monster once it is in full

working order. Obviously for such a subject a minutely exact ear is needed in the scripting, or much of the point is lost. And unfortunately Frederic Raphael, who elaborated the script from a short story by Stanley Ellin, proves to have little talent for writing speakable dialogue, so that the words which should instantly conjure up the man in fact are all too often patently unlikely to have been spoken by anyone anywhere.

But what about those Continental critics who might be enjoying the film if they didn't know the language? That is where Clive Donner's contribution comes in. Though the film often sounds so wrong, it generally looks triumphantly right. Not for a long time have we had such a glossy-looking colour film from British studios—the result, perhaps, of the production being, as the credits inform us, “designed in colour by Reece Pemberton,” and of some very attractive Eastman Colour photography by Nicolas Roeg. If one were captious one might complain that Donner plants his effects a little self-consciously: a shot like that in which we see climber and boss's daughter dancing raptly against a dark, hazy background of what we take to be a plush nightclub, and then move slowly further and further away to disclose that they are in fact dancing to the music of a car radio on a rusty barge in the Pool of London, is planted with just a little too much pride and care, is too evidently the result of hard thought rather than spontaneous invention. However, at least it is hard thought in the right sort of direction, and the result is for the most part very fetching indeed.

Also, Donner demonstrates again here a talent for getting the best out of his actors: if Millicent Martin as a modern upper-class miss (snooty but sexy with it) is appreciably miscast, Alan Bates has exactly the necessary mixture of charm and ruthlessness as the *arriviste* and Denholm Elliott gives his best performance in years as the instructor who makes over his own past into the hero's future. Indeed, it is a pity in more ways than one that he has to be murdered about two-thirds of the way through the film. Apart from anything else, this does play havoc with any satirical point the plot might have had as a representative case (if the meteoric rise of the hero can be achieved only by way of murder, that many fewer junior clerks in the audience are going to try it). But as a light and (visually speaking, at any rate) often witty fantasy *Nothing But the Best* still has enough charm and entertainment value to send one, if not cheering, at least purring quite contentedly from the cinema.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

LES VAMPIRES

LAST JULY'S SCREENING OF *Les Vampires* at the National Film Theatre was the first time it had ever been seen outside of Paris in at least forty years. Of course, it was not entirely unknown by reputation. André Bazin had placed it at the top of his ten best list; Alain Resnais had always claimed its director, Louis Feuillade, as one of his gods; Aragon, Breton and the whole surrealist movement had hailed it as one of the cinema's supreme masterpieces. Friends who lived in Paris spoke of it with awe. And yet it might have turned out to be one of those unexportable French tastes. After all, what is *Les Vampires*? Nine forty-minute episodes of a serial made in 1915 pasted together to make a six-hour film. A great success in its time, would it not seem today merely an amusing curio—a quaint bit of film archaeology?

That screening in July and two subsequent ones the following February gave us the answer. *Les Vampires* is indeed one of the cinema's supreme masterpieces. That much is certain. It is more difficult to explain why.

First of all, the film is not about vampires—bats or Transylvanians. It concerns a gang of jewel thieves who have taken the name of Vampires and the struggle of a young newspaperman to bring them to heel. It is difficult to say more than that, because all the inter-titles which originally accompanied the film no longer exist, and we are forced to figure out the story ourselves. So great is Feuillade's story-telling genius that the plot-line is rarely difficult to follow. And what a wealth of ingenuity Feuillade displays in inventing one fabulous gimmick after another—a simple enumeration of the various fantastic ways in which his characters manage to kill each other or escape from impossible situations would suffice to provide material for fifty ordinary thrillers.

Yet however extravagant the episodes become, they always remain more or less believable because Feuillade has solidly grounded the fantastic in everyday reality, thus making them at

A STREET SCENE FROM “LES VAMPIRES”.



once credible and even more frightening. In a perfectly ordinary looking room, a button is pressed and a cannon comes out of the fireplace, all set to destroy a nightclub next door. Before shooting the cannon, however, the curtains are first carefully drawn and the window opened; afterwards, methodically, the process is reversed. In a prison cell a man lies supposedly dead. Into the cell comes a warder, anxious to sneak a quiet smoke without being seen by his superiors. Suddenly the "dead" man springs from his bed, kills the warder, changes clothes with him, and disappears. Our hero's assistant, an amiable reformed Monsieur Verdoux, spies on the Vampires from a flower-pot bedecked window, all the while watering the plants from an old coffee-pot. Feuillade's final insolence appears when the presumably studio-shot window is closed revealing the reflection of the house opposite on the pane.

Little scenes remind us that Feuillade was the creator of the 1900 series "Life as it really is": the camaraderie of two maids entertaining each other with port wine in their squalid attic rooms; the touching vignette of the young concierge and her husband—established with an incredibly small number of shots. Of course it was partly for this conjugation of naturalism and the fantastic that the film appealed to the surrealists. But there is also all the poetry they found in deserted streets, *terrains vagues*, half-finished buildings; in short, a specifically urban poetry never more strikingly rendered in the cinema. Shot in real exteriors, *Les Vampires* has caught the mystery and sad charm of Paris, that specific pre-1914 atmosphere of *la belle époque*.

La belle époque: yes, but like the songs of Aristide Bruant, Feuillade has expressed the other side of the picture—not the can-can but the *java* and the Apache dance. And with them, the wave of anarchy which was so prominent a feature of French life in the early years of the century. For the jewel thieves are the real heroes of the film. Their gang, their organised plot against society, the potential revolutionary force of the underworld, provide a meaning for the film.

His contemporaries were not fooled: a great wave of protest arose against Feuillade's glamorisation of crime, even though the Vampires are ultimately vanquished by the police. It is significant however that the high priestess of the Vampires, Irma Vep, played by the disquietingly beautiful Musidora, is killed neither by the police nor by our reporter-hero. It is the reporter's wife who shoots her down and, in a give-away shot, the hero lingers longingly over her dead body. This could simply be an unconscious expression of Feuillade's understanding of the sexual attraction exercised by this dominating woman, but it could equally well be an unconscious recognition of a society in love with its own destruction. When a large party of rich people are gassed by the Vampires it is surely significant that the gas is sweet-smelling, and that the guests first think it is a new brand of incense or perfume.

Is this reading too much into a simple thriller? I think not. For it was not just the beauty of the photography, the surprise at Feuillade's astonishing deep-focus compositions nor the exhilaration of his narrative brio that held those three NFT audiences for six hours. Underneath all that there was something more: the eruption into bourgeois life of its victims, of the underground forces arising to confound the *status quo*. Like the anarchist movement itself, like the Bonnot gang—some of whose exploits Feuillade copied—*Les Vampires* expresses that revolutionary fervour which was soon to explode. Not, indeed, in France, but to the East.

RICHARD ROUD

In Brief

MAMMA ROMA (*Gala*). It is easy enough to pick holes in *Mamma Roma* as a cry of social protest. The plot, on the face of it, is mawkish: ex-prostitute blackmails her teenage son Ettore into a steady job, ex-pimp forces her back on the streets, son finds out, goes to the bad and ends up "crucified" on a prison hospital bed. The development is arbitrary, with Mamma Roma drunkenly confiding instalments of her past to a string of grinning men who loom conveniently in and out of the darkness as she roams the neon-lit highway. (As in *Accattone*, camera and characters do a fair amount of walking.) And yet *Mamma Roma* expresses exactly and unsparingly what its writer-director, Pier Paolo Pasolini, feels: complete subjective identification with the latent fatalism of his characters. His totalitarian methods can never be to the majority taste: Franco Citti, louringly impressive as the pimp, hardly ever appears without the aid of Vivaldi; Ettore's girl friend covets a tiny ornamental skull dangling from someone's key-chain; Ettore's



"SEX CAN BE DIFFICULT", FULVIA FRANCO AND NINO MANFREDI.

crucifixion is lovingly held in three long and repetitive tracking shots, while his mother tries to throw herself from a window overlooking St. Peter's Dome in the distance. I happen to find all this extraordinarily moving for the reason that such melodramatic situations are, for all that, elementally true. Pasolini's evasion of conventional realism strikes me as being deliberately used to underline a similar evasion on the part of his characters; just as his unintegrated camera style mirrors their underlying states of mind, all opportunism and casual brutality.

In its rhetorical way the film is a good deal more powerful and assured than *Accattone*. There is a gaunt, prophetic splendour about those recurring shots of wasteland dotted with ruined, twisted pinnacles of stone and brick. And, of course, there is Magnani—her vivid lack of restraint, only occasionally intrusive, contrasting effectively with the lazy, loose-bodied charm of the actor (Ettore Garofolo) playing her son. Several of their scenes together—dancing the tango; trying out a new motor-bike—have a curious cut-off quality which appears not only to circumscribe them but to divorce Pasolini himself from society. Artistically such uncompromising isolation can either make or yet undo him. So far, at any rate, it has been his proudest decoration.—PETER JOHN DYER

BOTH THE PORTMANTEAU SEX CAN BE DIFFICULT (*Gala/Miracle*) and the piecemeal **I NUOVI ANGELI** (*Connoisseur*) concern themselves with human bafflement. The first, a slighter and wiser film, limits itself to sympathetic observation and improves steadily throughout its three parts, thus gaining a presumably accidental but refreshing impression of overall shape. The first episode, *The Women*, is negligible; but with *The Snake* and *The Soldier's Adventure* the comedy achieves an unusual tenderness. In *The Snake* (director: Alberto Bonucci) this is largely due to Lilli Palmer's acting. The early psychological exposition of her emotional state is explicit in a way which reminds one of the funnier excesses of Lawrence's *Women in Love*; but her performance is allowed to flower when her husband's car breaks down and she is given a lift between two truck drivers. Her slow and happy adjustment to the idea of rape is delicately conveyed in an appealing scene which completely overshadows its surrounding framework. *The Soldier's Adventure* is by far the best of the three pieces. It owes a great deal of the strangeness of its feeling to the original story by Italo Calvino, but it is well translated to film by the direction and acting of Nino Manfredi. It is a comedy of embarrassment and slapstick, but has disturbing undertones. A soldier in a railway compartment yields slowly to a trance of lust when a young and beautiful widow sits beside him, and he makes advances to her in a confusion of timidity, bravado, and collapsing scruples. The guilty terror with which Manfredi

reacts to each slapstick misfortune makes one unwilling to laugh at him; the unawareness of his fellow passengers isolates the sinful couple horribly. When he is finally alone with the woman, the smallness of the compartment, the narrowness of the seat, and the sick, unwilling way in which he closes the compartment door and draws the blinds, combine to emphasise that his triumph has become a trap. More than most comedy heroes he is a poor, bare, forked animal.

I Nuovi Angeli, directed by Ugo Gregoretti, is more baffled and less successful. It is conceived as a sort of comic-sensational fictionalised documentary. Given the material—the problems of adjustment between old and new standards—the idea is a good one; but the end result is a great deal less interesting than the conception. The film juggles gaily with the difficulties of sex, poverty, sex, class, sex, changing economic values, world affairs, sex, and survival in the final holocaust, but makes little of juxtaposing these. The illustrative stories glide fluently from point to point, but only isolated moments arrest the attention. The most attractive scenes of the film come from its affectionate and only slightly soured delight in stupidity, the camera relishing incomprehension's beautiful blankness. Some of the stories and images have an air of contrivance, as for instance when lower class girls have rejected the improper advances of upper class boys on board a yacht and the yacht returns to harbour, the camera observing from a distance that all the girls are in the stern around the helmsman, the boys all in the bows, grumbling. Towards the end a character sees the beginning of *I Nuovi Angeli* itself repeated on television and comments: "More tripe about us." The line has neither the power of true artistic frustration nor the humility of an apology. It is simply a flippant and self-consciously defeatist shrug, to which a shrug is the only answer.

J. H. FENWICK

CHARADE (Rank) and **THE PRIZE** (M-G-M). If anyone's admiration for Hitchcock still needs confirming, these two comedy-thrillers ought to do the trick, if only by force of comparison. Both walk, one warily and one shamelessly, in the master's footsteps; and if one would rather be watching *To Catch a Thief* or *North by Northwest* this is really no reflection on Stanley Donen and Mark Robson, who cannot but labour under the disadvantage of not being Hitchcock. Donen comes closest to the manner in the very opening shots of *Charade*, when a hand holding a pistol swings menacingly in close-up—only to squirt a jet of water at a pale, befurred Audrey Hepburn. Donen's plot is an elaborate treasure-hunt, with three toughs and a thoroughly equivocal Cary Grant on the trail of riches which everyone but Audrey Hepburn believes to be in her possession; and the key evidence is both thunderingly implausible (it depends on the virtual blindness of the Paris police) and a shade too obviously planted. In fact, *Charade* allows itself to get slightly tangled up in its own plot, which involves explanations of who is who, who is chasing whom, and why, at every halt in the action. Donen's technique is to handle the excitements almost straight, as the man with the metal hand, the drawling Texan, and their little bank-clerkish confederate hound Miss Hepburn around the city; to fill in with some attractive Paris locations; and to rely on Miss Hepburn and Cary Grant to keep up a cool, unconcerned stream of dialogue, with a wisecrack for every new peril. The denouement, a good old-fashioned chase under arcades, along passages, and into

a deserted theatre, makes an agreeably active change from so much resolutely bright, take-it-on-the-chin conversation.

Mark Robson's *The Prize* has a plot so formidably silly that some critics seem to have assumed, surely unfairly, that the film-makers didn't themselves realise its absurdity. Irving Wallace's best-seller apparently took itself altogether more solemnly; but Ernest Lehman, scriptwriter also of *North by Northwest*, has concocted out of it a surprisingly engaging fantasy, in which the winner of the Nobel prize for literature (Paul Newman) foils a Communist plot to spirit the prize-winner for physics behind the Iron Curtain, and delivers him, tottering but still game, to the rostrum just in time to collect his award. Mr. Lehman borrows most amiably from himself: the auction episode in *North by Northwest*, in which Cary Grant gets himself placed in police custody, turns up here with the setting switched to a nudist lecture; and he repeats the scene in which the hero, bringing the police back to the scene of the crime, finds the furniture shifted around and a blandly impervious woman in possession. To take imitation a stage further, Robson even shoots a love scene between Elke Sommer and Paul Newman precisely after the Hitchcock manner. This is all good pastiche, and the cheerful assumption behind *The Prize* seems to be that we will recognise it as such, and take its excitements (hero pushed from top of high building by raincoated first villain; hero chased by car across bridge; heroine whisked aboard Iron Curtain freighter) in the spirit of bravado in which they are offered. Paul Newman is an admirably cool but bemused hero and Edward G. Robinson dies with distinction, as the actor who "specialises in political roles". Criticism retreats, disarmed, before a film which hardly even allows itself to become serious about the Nobel prize.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

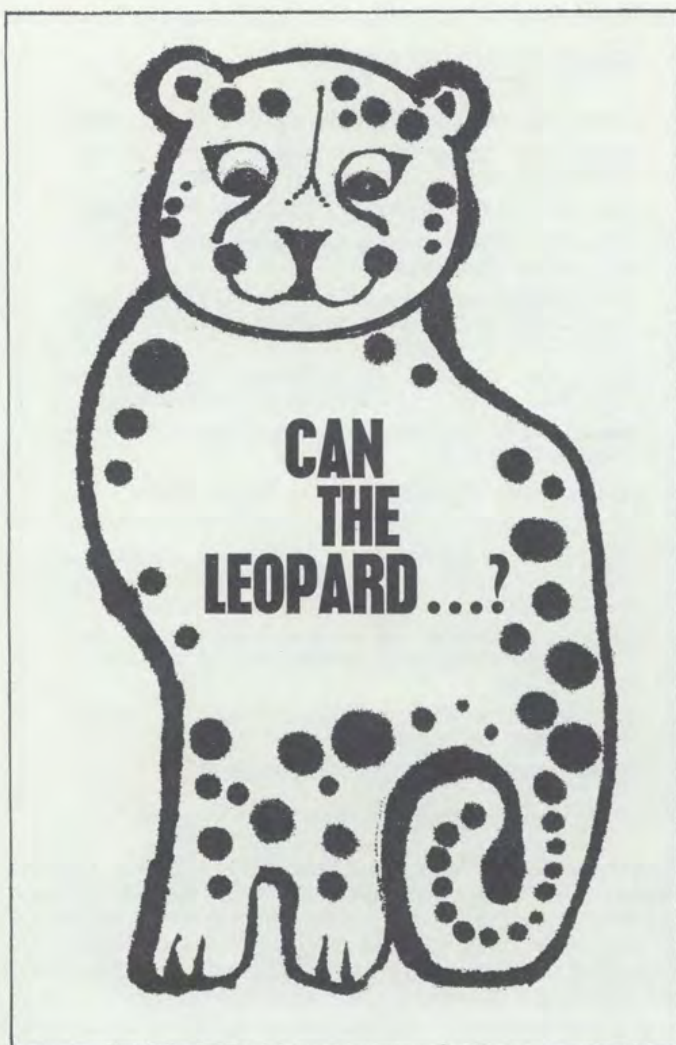
IRMA LA DOUCE (United Artists). Set mainly in a bawdy-house that is never in the least bawdy, Billy Wilder's *Irma La Douce* is the kind of fantasy much favoured by Hollywood—a sex comedy from which sex has been carefully eradicated. Enticed into the cinema by the promise of untold orgies, audiences are sent away reassured that even wildly successful prostitutes have no sex life to speak of, and that the habitués of the Rue Casanova are perhaps a little more colourful but scarcely less wholesome than themselves. Now that so many continental directors are presenting a different, and more accurate, picture of prostitution, one can hardly blame Wilder for trying to suspend disbelief, and even disappointment, by laying on the charm with a trowel. The trouble is that in doing so, he has thrown sophistication overboard in what should have been an ultra-sophisticated film.

Treated simply as a piece of inverted romanticism, the story of Irma (Shirley MacLaine), queen of the tarts, being wooed and won by Nestor (Jack Lemmon), the most honest man who ever came her way, is certainly amusing, but not amusing enough to hold the screen successfully for 141 minutes. It is, in fact, padded out with an unnecessarily protracted sub-plot which has Lemmon, somewhat disastrously, impersonating an English lord, who looks a little like Jimmy Edwards and talks mainly in British film titles. Leaning heavily on its rather unlikely love affair, the film is often flabby where it should have been as hard as nails. Nestor sentimentalises about the miracle that has converted the street-walker into the wife and mother-to-be; and what should have been the punch scene, when the wedding is rushed through so that Irma can give birth to a baby in the vestry, embarrasses by its lack of astringency rather than lack of taste. Instead of the sort of explosively uninhibited satire of the whole upside-down Hollywood code that Wilder is surely sharp enough to have made, *Irma La Douce* is, in fact, a fairly routine frolic. On this level, it has much of the best that Hollywood can give: witty dialogue by Wilder and I. A. L. Diamond; a lush score by Andre Previn; art direction by Alexander Trauner that creates, in superb colour and several dimensions, a Paris that exists only in the imagination; and a couple of irresistible stars. No one else could say "I never remember a face" with quite the same mixture of innocence and innuendo as Shirley MacLaine's Irma; and Lemmon's first appearance as, apparently, the only honest policeman ever posted on the Rue Casanova, is an infectiously gay moment.

Wilder's direction is distinguished not so much for what it does for the film as a whole, as for what it can pack into a single frame. Nestor's fight with Irma's former protector, Hippolyte the Ox, and a champagne-swilling party scene, in which Irma dances on a table top, are handled with splendid panache. This is, in fact, the right way to make a musical, and, on the stage, *Irma La Douce* was a musical. Under the circumstances it seems a pity that someone thought fit to change all that.—ELIZABETH SUSSEX

SHIRLEY MACLAINE IN "IRMA LA DOUCE".





BY BRENDA DAVIES

THERE IS NOTHING NEW ABOUT directors claiming that their work has been mangled. Von Stroheim, Welles, Antonioni, Losey, to quote only the names that come immediately to mind, have all complained bitterly and publicly in the past; and there must be more instances than we shall ever know about, where the people concerned have not chosen to speak out. Indeed, in an art that is also an industry and which relies on a series of mechanical processes to bring it to life, distortion of the original concept is likely to be the rule rather than the exception. All the more credit therefore to the few giants who have stamped their individuality on work which, by its very nature, is subject to the touch of so many hands.

Few would deny Visconti's claim to be one of these giants, and the arrival in London of the American release version of his *The Leopard* touched off the kind of publicity usually reserved for Elizabeth Taylor's matrimonial adventures. "Leopard Man Sues Fox," shouted the headlines in the evening papers, conjuring up a truly newsworthy zoological event. The more sober papers, whose critics had already deplored the difference between the London Leopard and the much more magnificent animal they had seen at Cannes, published letters from Visconti and some of his collaborators. Since this is a matter of great interest to all of us who pay money at the box-office, it might be worth trying to sort out the facts of the *Leopard* case. Visconti's allegations were summarised in his *Sunday Times* article of October 27th, 1963. The American version, he says, was prepared without his

supervision: "It was in my view badly cut and dubbed with ill-chosen, unsuitable voices . . . When I saw the film in New York I had difficulty in following the plot . . . Moreover the film has been processed as if it were a bright piece of Hollywoodiana . . . It is now a work for which I acknowledge no paternity at all."

The original running time of *The Leopard* was 205 minutes. The version shown in Britain and America is 44 minutes shorter. A scrutiny of the French text (published in *L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma*, No. 32/33) reveals that a number of small but important linking scenes have been cut (see box on page 100). Obviously an effort has been made not to disrupt whole sequences, but the cutters have failed to appreciate that they were dislocating the rhythm of the original, so that the first half of the film now seems to progress by a series of jerks. Thus the "picnic" sequence has been shortened in such a way that all explanation of where the family are going, and why, has disappeared. They seem to be merely setting out on an elaborate joy-ride. But the most insensitive cut is in the long hunting duologue between the Prince and Don Ciccio, where there is a sudden jump from Don Fabrizio gazing out over the hills, to the bedroom quarrel with his wife. Here the missing link is a long revelation by Don Ciccio of Angelica's curious family background. The original dissolve came as he crossed himself at the end of his rather sordid story. The effect on the sense and feeling of the quarrel scene which follows, and the ironic force it lends to the Princess's protests, must be obvious.

The dubbing of the English-speaking version has also come in for criticism, and before going into the rights and wrongs of this one ought perhaps to clear the ground a little. It is always misleading in the case of continental co-productions, with their polyglot casts, to speak of "original versions". Shooting on *The Leopard* was done mainly in English, but most of the players had reverted to their native tongues before the end. For the Italian version the entire cast, including the Italian stars, were dubbed into Italian. For the French version only Delon, Cardinale, Reggiani and Pierre Clementi (Fernando Paolo) dubbed their own voices. The English version had Burt Lancaster and Leslie French (Chevalley) speaking their own parts, the rest being dubbed by American actors. Dubbing is itself a controversial process, and the arguments on both sides are well known, but there is little doubt that in international productions of this kind it is here to stay. In the present case Lancaster's mid-Atlantic accent, the strong American twang of most of the supporting cast, and Leslie French's plummy Shaftesbury Avenue tones, certainly make a discordant mixture. Light is shed on the making of the English version by Archibald Colquhoun in a letter to the *Sunday Times* (December 15th, 1963). Mr. Colquhoun was employed as English dialogue adviser and translator to Visconti.

"This spring," he says, "an emissary of Twentieth Century-Fox appeared in Rome and took the version to be made for the English-speaking market entirely out of Visconti's control . . . The only part of the original English sound track which remains intact is the dialogue between Don Fabrizio and the Piedmontese Chevalley, added to the original script by Lancaster and myself with Visconti's blessing. Though most of the English dialogue was taken over by the dubbers they sprinkled it with their own discordant phrases."

Visconti's third line of complaint concerned colour. The film was shot on Eastman Colour stock in Technirama, and the Italian and French prints were processed by Technicolor, whose release prints are produced from matrices made direct from the original negative. But the prints released by Fox are in their own wide-screen system, CinemaScope, and were processed by the Fox subsidiary, De Luxe Laboratories Inc. This involved the use of a "dupe" negative, with some consequent loss of colour fidelity and definition. Those who

have seen *The Leopard* in both systems are in no doubt about the superiority of the Technicolor version, but even without seeing the original it is quite easy to discern the weaknesses of the De Luxe prints. Most of the interiors suffer from a bluish haze, the definition is sometimes poor and the colour composition, especially in the ballroom scenes, is often crude.

Visconti's case, then, is undoubtedly a strong one from the aesthetic point of view. But has he any hope of legal redress? Have his reported threats to sue the distributors any real force? It seems from his own letter to *The Times* of December 17th, 1963, that he does not really think so.

"... But other than express my regret, it seems that there is nothing I can do to prevent the circulation of a version that I have neither seen nor approved in the least before its presentation to the public; indeed it seems that the author of a film work, unlike what happens for any other artistic manifestation, is obliged to guarantee himself in advance with appropriately stipulated clauses against alterations of his work, otherwise he will have to stand alterations of any kind..."

* * *

But who is the "author of a film work"? Here is the nub of a problem that has never really been satisfactorily solved. In Britain the Copyright Committee, upon whose recommendations the Copyright Act, 1956, is largely based, decided that the time had come to recognise that: "A film together with its sound-track, if it has one, should be regarded as a distinct type of work in which a distinct copyright may subsist, and that such copyright should subsist in the film as a whole, and should relate both to the copying of the film and to its performance in public. If there should be any other copyrights subsisting in any parts of that film, e.g. in any individual photograph, in the story on which it is based, in its own particular script or in its music, these should be independent of the film copyright." This form of words was an attempt to avoid the complications caused by the several copyrights already existing in the component parts of a film. The new "film copyright" was to be vested in the person, whether a company or an individual, responsible for making the film; and the new Act adopted the definition of the maker already used in the Cinematograph Films Acts: "The person by whom the arrangements necessary for the making of the film are undertaken." No attempt seems to have been made to go any further in defining the functions of the producer or director in this context, but there can be little doubt that the Act leaves the producer or production company in possession, and that unless he is his own producer or working for his own company the director has fewer rights than the authors of the script or the music, who are at least nominally protected by their "independent" copyrights.

In France, where they like to have everything cut and dried, the rights of the producer as author were established as early as 1935, and the whole matter of the rights of the various participants has been gone into in great detail and tested in the courts. The "producer as author" theory was abandoned in 1947, and was eventually replaced in 1957 by legislation which recognised that a film was the work of many collaborators, among whom it acknowledged as co-authors those concerned with its "intellectual creation". These included the authors of the scenario, adaptation and dialogue, the composer and the director. Like our own law, this one defined the producer as the person who takes the initiative and responsibility for making the film; but it also defined the completed film as "a standard copy" agreed between director or co-authors and the producer. As the "moral rights" of the various co-authors can be exercised only on this agreed standard copy, their rights would seem to be more formal than practical. But at least the director's share in the proceedings is recognised in principle.

Curiously enough a French director, Jean-Luc Godard, has just run into trouble over the Italian release print of his film *Le Mépris* which almost exactly duplicates, as it were in

THE LEOPARD

CUTS FROM ORIGINAL VERSION: CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

Small scene of prostitutes and a soldier as Don Fabrizio is on his way to visit Mariannina.

Tancredi and sentries en route to Donnafugata.

Tancredi, Father Pirrone and coachmen at an inn en route to Donnafugata.

Don Fabrizio and a farmer en route to Donnafugata; explanation of how a sympathetic general helped the family to get passes.

Flashback, Tancredi and Concetta, following the General's viewing of the frescoes at Donnafugata.

Flashback, the General's song, immediately following previous flashback.

Various cuts in conversation at dinner party.

Don Calogero and peasants, before the plebiscite.

Don Ciccio's speech about Angelica's mother, at end of first hunting duologue between Don Fabrizio and Don Ciccio.

Angelica's mother at mass—visualised by Don Fabrizio after conversation with Don Calogero about the marriage.

Teasing of Chevalley by Fernando Paolo on Chevalley's arrival at Donnafugata.

Various minor cuts in ballroom sequence.

reverse, Visconti's experience with *The Leopard*. Godard claims that the Italian version was cut by 900 feet, the dialogue and music re-written and the colour changed. His objections do not apply to the English language version. Here is an interesting change from the process of continental films being severely cut for the British and American markets.

As a matter of fact, it has lately become almost as common here for American films to suffer distributor cuts as for continental ones. Non-American films are still more likely to be shortened by censorship, but the specialised distributors in this country do not as a rule make cuts of their own, particularly when they take a film in its original language version. Dubbed versions are another matter, and Autant-Lara's *Story of the Count of Monte Cristo*, shown here at precisely half its original three-hour running time, must have set up something of a record. American films which have recently undergone cuts here include Huston's *Freud* (20 minutes), *Gypsy* (6 mins.), *Susan Slade* (15 mins.), *The Outsider* (15 mins.), *Mutiny on the Bounty* (7 mins.), *Studs Lonigan* (8 mins.), *4 for Texas* (9 mins.), *The Notorious Landlady* (10 mins.), and *It Started in Tokyo* (28 minutes, involving total disappearance of the characters played by Agnes Moorehead and William Demarest). In at least two of these films the cuts made a very real difference to actual comprehension of the plot; and in the case of *The Outsider* in effect falsified it by supplying a completely different ending.

The reason for cuts of this kind is often quite simply a pre-determined programme pattern into which the film must fit. To argue this would raise all the old hares about second features, the use of shorts and so on. But films like *The Leopard* really are special cases, and it is perhaps only fair to look at them also from the point of view of the producer and distributor, who are after all usually the people involved in finding the financial backing in the first place. *The Leopard* cost £2,500,000. The producers could not hope to recover its cost in Italy and France alone. They had to seek world-wide distribution, and this involved the use of an internationally known star and the resources of a company with world-

wide organisation. The world distribution deal with Fox automatically involved the use of prints in CinemaScope and De Luxe Color. It also apparently involved supervision of the English language version by Burt Lancaster. The view of the distributors themselves is not hard to see. They had taken on what was to them a ticklish "art-house" proposition with only Burt Lancaster's name as a major selling angle in their principal mass market, the United States. The cuts and changes they made were a genuine attempt to adapt the product for the consumer. The fact that they seem to have underestimated the consumer's taste is an indication of their failure to understand that a film is not just so many yards of celluloid, and that the only man likely to be able to change and adapt it successfully is the artist who made it. Still and all, as the Americans say, I would rather see Fox's mutilated *Leopard* than be unable to see it at all.

Perhaps the last word should go to another director whose work has suffered much mutilation even though his budgets

have never been in the blockbuster class. In a letter to the *Sunday Telegraph* (December 29th, 1963) Joseph Losey said:

"As film audiences become more sophisticated and knowledgeable, a director's signature on a film has properly become a hallmark of personal identity and particular worth. Yet under existing contracts, producers and distributors are generally free (and all too often take advantage of this freedom) grossly to distort or change the finished work of a director, still retaining his name on the film in spite of any protest he may make. . . . Official censorship can be fought and publicised. But unbounded mutilation of rhythm, text, score, colour, quality of print, even actors' voices, can and does take place without any redress or publicity."

Not without publicity in the case of *The Leopard* anyway. Let us hope that the attention this case has received may help to make a repetition less likely.

BOOK REVIEWS

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME, by C. A. Lejeune. (Hutchinson, 25s.)

PERHAPS THE MOST SURPRISING thing about Caroline Lejeune, as these reminiscences reveal her, was her decision to become a film critic. Her tastes would seem to be all for gardens, rose-growing, peace and quiet at home. She had no liking for film festivals, critical theorising, noise, restaurants, time spent in London (though she records that, at the very outset, "I even found Wardour Street alluring"); and she suffered from "a stupid kind of claustrophobia" which made her always choose to sit at the end of a row in a cinema. But Caroline Lejeune first made up her mind to write about films when this was not so much a profession as an aspiration, and visits to the cinema had to be made a trifle furtively in case her mother's staid friends caught her in the act. She badgered C. P. Scott, who happened to be a family friend, and James Bone, London editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, into giving her a column, "The Week on the Screen", for which (in 1922) she was paid five pounds a week.

At that time, national as opposed to trade press critics were tolerated rather than encouraged, and Lejeune was, she recalls, one of "a small band, perhaps six or seven." Promotion stunts, however, were in full cry, including packing trade shows with hundreds of clergymen, Alsations (as audience for Rin Tin Tin?) or mothers-in-law; shooting the climactic scene of Hall Caine's *The Christian* at the Derby, with an abashed Richard Dix affecting to harangue the crowd in the Silver Ring; and transporting Lejeune herself to an encampment in the Highlands, improbable location for a picture about feuding gypsies. Among some more ambitious memories of Twenties filmgoing (nine hours of *Dr. Mabuse* in a Wardour Street cellar; *Potemkin* stumbled on by chance in the workers' quarter of Berlin), she recalls a British silent film already struggling to keep up with foreign fashion, in this case by doing without titles. "The leading characters had to inform the audience that they were planning to pick hops. Believe me, they did really stand on one leg and hop across the screen . . ."

For the most part, however, Miss Lejeune is writing not about the cinema but about what she describes as "a typically middle-class life." She seems to have total recall—or a full set of diaries—of childhood Christmases, tennis-playing schooldays, Manchester university, pre-war trips abroad, family holidays at Bexhill, wartime

shelter existence, alongside the occasional Cliveden weekends with the Astors, encounters with the stars and sorties into the television studios, which are her own variations on the middle-class chronicle. Hitchcock turns up, doodling all over the tablecloth at the Carlton Grill; Grace Moore advises her never to sign autographs on blank sheets of paper; Korda lets her go for Saturday picnics to Denham, whose inhabitants included a herd of goats left over from *Things to Come*. The book chatters along: homely, enthusiastic, sometimes startlingly naive, addressed to a reader revealingly presumed to be a woman who "gets (it) out of a library, because someone told her it was written by a film critic."

The critic who gave *Zéro de Conduite* "one for trying" and who was once prepared "to declare categorically that films are not an art," was also in all probability the general press critic in whom most readers placed most confidence. When she published the collection of reviews called *Chestnuts in My Lap* it was described as a book which "the non-filmgoing reader can enjoy." That, for the filmgoing reader, was rather the trouble; and also helps to explain Miss Lejeune's great popularity with her readers, with whom for thirty-two years she sustained her Sunday dialogue in *The Observer*. She was a first-rate columnist, for whom sentiment would usually win out over theory. "I was careful not to join in talk about neo-realism. In later years, for the same reason, I was careful not to join in talks about the *nouvelle vague*. The reason is simple: I had no notion what the terms implied, except that some directors were doing more exciting work than other directors."

Nothing is more likely to win the heart of the English reader than a disparaging way with "critical jargon" or "highbrow nonsense". It confirms him in that essential indolence of mind which probably goes further than anything else towards explaining why our cinema dawdles so far behind the French and the Italian. Miss Lejeune's *Observer* column was one of the many fragments which helped to shore up this English attitude to the cinema, which is only perhaps now beginning to fissure as a newer generation of critics opens up the cracks. Caroline Lejeune retired just over three years ago, with a conviction that the 'X' certificate had a good deal to do with the cinema's decline. How out of sympathy she would be, one feels, with practically everything that has happened since she left.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

A MILLION AND ONE NIGHTS. A History of the Motion Picture. By Terry Ramsaye. (Simon and Schuster, New York. \$10. Frank Cass, London. 75s.)

TERRY RAMSAYE'S IS ONE OF those great pioneering works in motion picture history which must be familiar as a title in footnotes and bibliographies to any reader interested in the silent American cinema, even though few of them will know the book at first hand. It originally came out in 1926, in a limited edition signed by Edison, the book's great hero, and was subsequently brought out in a more popular version—which appears, incidentally, to be reproduced exactly by photolithography for the present edition. In his preface the author explains its genesis in a series of articles commissioned for *Photoplay* in 1920, which grew and grew until they finally ran for three years and were then further enlarged for the book. His great

advantage in all this was that he was exploring territory not systematically explored before by anyone, and doing so at a time when virtually all the people vitally concerned in the technical evolution of the American cinema and its first artistic achievements were still around to be questioned. As a compilation of what they told him the book still, certainly, has enormous value; though even here it has to be used with care, since Ramsaye, concerned to keep his writing light and entertaining, makes us take the sources of much of his documentation on trust.

So far, so good; there is clearly reason enough for the text to be made available again to the film historian, who will know how big a pinch of salt to take it with. But the form of the present edition suggests (despite a rather startling English price) that it is being presented straight as just a good, authoritative book on the birth of the cinema for the general reader. This is, to say the least, arguable. Not that it does not remain in many ways surprisingly readable; the very period journal has a charm of its own, and one does not mind being informed that Mary Pickford "was born into the most humble circumstances of life and lived close to the shadow of want," or having other simple statements wrapped in grand or weirdly slangy locutions. But too much of the book is taken up with a breathless, romance-of-invention, blow by blow account of Edison's discoveries and the endless battles over patents, rights, etc. For those who are interested, this material is summarised more straightforwardly in many other books which sit comfortably on one of the two stools Ramsaye falls between: either treating the subject as a brief prelude to the story of the cinema as an art, or devoting themselves entirely to disentangling the ins and outs of who precisely invented what when.

In comparison with the former Ramsaye's book fails by being an elaborate introduction to nothing very much (though he talks imposingly about Griffith "evolving screen syntax" he really has little to say about the artistic application of Edison's invention, and his later chapters degenerate into a jumble of biographical chat about early stars and the commercial battles of early production companies); while in comparison with the latter his work has to be understood as a complete and pretty one-sided presentation of Edison's case. The controversial Dickson, Edison's assistant, appears and is assigned what seems, in spite of recent attempts to build him into an ill-used genius, to be a fair share of the credit. But parallel European developments are little discussed, and poor Friese Greene appears only as a mild lunatic with an obsessive passion for claiming other people's inventions. *A Million and One Nights* clearly is, and will remain, a book for the specialist to refer to from time to time. But vital reading for the average modern cinephile? Surely not.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

MOVIEGOER, No. 1. Winter 1964. \$1.

FILM CULTURE, Nos. 28 and 31. Spring 1963 and Winter 1963-64. \$1.

CAHIERS DU CINEMA, No. 150-151, December 1963-January 1964. 9 Fr.

POSITIF 57. December 1963. 4.50 Fr.

IS IT REALLY ONLY the French who are ever going to be prepared to take Hollywood seriously, either for pleasure like *Positif*, or, like the *Cahiers*, for edification? Both Robert Benayoun's long and enthusiastic essay in *Positif* and the superb documentation of *Cahiers'* special number betoken a labour of love which no Anglo-Saxon magazine would think worth undertaking. True, there has been *Movie* and Andrew Sarris' single-minded and all-but single-handed compilation for *Film Culture* 28, which offers a survey of the American cinema similar to, but less exhaustive and more idiosyncratic than the *Cahiers* bonanza. But for the rest a sampling of recent periodicals suggests that the picture has changed little, if at all, over the last few years. American criticism, in particular, seems tangential and off-centre—and divided against itself into the bargain. Only the backwash of an acrimonious discussion of the so-called *auteur* theory manages to disturb the quiet and separate backwaters of Berkeley, Calif., home of the academic school, and Greenwich Village, centre of the art-film *avant garde*.

It is not only lack of concern with the basic cinematic staples provided by the native industry that one regrets: it is also the general absence of a critical mainstream. A new venture, *Moviegoer*, published in New York but with collaborators in San Francisco, may yet succeed in establishing something of the kind, and also in filling the breach between Campus and Village. The first issue contains pieces on Rossellini, Truffaut and Hitchcock, all good mainstream stuff; a well reasoned attack on *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, and liberal clichés in general; a contribution

(mandatory) to the *auteur* debate; and some general material of varying quality. Solid, thoughtful and (with one exception) refreshingly unpretentious for what it is, it still lacks either excitement or a definite corporate personality. But it is a good start.

For an idea of what *Moviegoer* is reacting against one has only to look at the latest issue of *Film Culture*, the Greenwich Village parish magazine—arch, jejune, blinkered and pretentious beyond belief. For the record, the Herman G. and Gretchen Weinberg Mutual Admiration Society Inc. is going strong at number XLI of its famous *causeries*. The rest of the magazine meanwhile trails far behind at issue 31, cultivating its own private *avant* and *arrière garde* herbaceous borders. Except for the entry on to the scene of Mr. William Burroughs, everything to do with this *avant garde* seems unchanged since we last heard of it back in the Twenties.

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH

BOOKS RECEIVED

LUIS BUNUEL. By Ado Kyrou, translated by Adrienne Foulke. (Simon and Schuster, New York, \$1.95.)

ESTHETIQUE ET PSYCHOLOGIE DU CINEMA. 1. Les Structures. By Jean Mitry. (Editions Universitaires, Paris.)

JEAN-PIERRE MELVILLE. By Jean Wagner. (Editions Seghers, Paris, 6.90 Fr.)

THE STORY OF THE MISFITS. By James Goode. (Bobbs Merrill, New York, \$5.)

TOM JONES: Film script. By John Osborne. (Faber and Faber, 15s.)

VINGT ANS DE CINEMA SOVIETIQUE. By Luda and Jean Schnitzer. (Editions C.I.B., Paris.)

LUCHINO VISCONTI. By Giuseppe Ferrara. (Editions Seghers, Paris, 6.90 Fr)

WHERE WE CAME IN. By Charles Oakley. (Allen and Unwin, 36s.)

FILM CLIPS

continued from page 91

still an evident come-on built into such an advertising line: come and see for yourself, whisper the advertisements; bargain price, they shout pretty unambiguously. And elementary mathematics suggests that ten half-crowns is better than four five shillingses, if it works that way. But the Jacey people protest their sincerity in the matter, and have given evidence of good intentions, at least, by making over the Cinephone and the Jacey to pictures which they consider quality and which are certain, anyway, to be less immediately lucrative than nudist epics. One could, of course, dispute their ideas of what does constitute cinematic quality: *Knights of the Teutonic Order* and *The Stranger* are acceptable enough, and *The Wolf Trap* and *Ivan's Childhood* certainly qualify as brave attempts, though it is difficult to see quite where *Mysteries of Paris* or *O.S.S. 117* or *The Kinsey Report* fit in. No doubt Jacey feel rather bitter because films like *Ivan's Childhood* and *The Wolf Trap* are not better received by those very critics who should be welcoming a return to quality cinema, and of course in a way they are right. Except that critics would rather see a good popular film than a dull quality film (it is a pity Jacey did not press-show Corman's extraordinary *The Terror*: there they might well have found themselves with a critical success on their hands).

In any case, Jacey tell me sadly, they have been making more money on the nudies in news-theatres than they did at continental-type cinemas, though, interestingly, doing less well than they were previously at the news-theatres with the usual mixture of news, cartoons and shorts. Meanwhile, they are wondering ruefully how long it takes to build up a regular public for quality again. They wonder if the nude films haven't given their cinemas a bad name. Perhaps they will be pushed back to nude films again before long, but they seem genuine enough in their desire to steer clear of them if possible, and that at least is a mercy. One wouldn't mind so much if the nude films offered were really erotic, wholeheartedly suggestive. But unfortunately they are just plain dull, and even bad quality cinema is usually slightly preferable to that.

ARKADIN

CORRESPONDENCE

Hong Kong Notes

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—I have read with interest Mr. Ian Jarvie's "Hong Kong Notes" in your Winter 1963/64 issue and would like to supplement a word or two.

As mentioned in Mr. Jarvie's article, Mandarin films are booming and out-grossing foreign films, not only in Chinese areas (the term Chinese areas is rather misleading because 99 per cent of the population in Hong Kong are Chinese) but in all cinema houses. For instance, even *Cleopatra* was out-grossed on certain play-dates by a local black and white small screen comedy. Last year a black and white small screen comedy produced by Great Wall Movies Enterprises Ltd. grossed nearly half a million dollars, breaking box-office records of all local productions and out-grossing all Western films except two, all local productions except one, all in colour and widescreen. The title of the film was *The Gentleman Steals*, directed by Hu Hsiao-fung, a young man in his thirties. This film proved to a certain extent that the audience would go to see a good story despite their "definite conservatism and lack of sophistication."

Most foreign correspondents write about the "big two" in Hong Kong, the Shaw Brothers and MP and GI. On the average, MP and GI pictures do not enjoy such good box-office receipts as Shaw's films. On the other hand, perhaps with the exception of two or three "super" productions, Shaw's films are often out-grossed by films produced by Feng Huang Motion Picture Co., another leading Mandarin film producing company. So far as we Chinese are concerned, we have three big film companies here. They are Shaw's, Feng Huang and Great Wall, with MP and GI coming fourth.

In recent years, Li Han-hsiang has earned himself the reputation of a director of costume films, but he did not make *Madame White Snake*, which was directed by the veteran Yueh Fung. Yueh Fung is one of the most experienced and respected directors in Hong Kong, the others being Chu Shih-ling of Feng Huang and Li Pin-tien of Great Wall, all in their sixties and having about forty years of experience in film directing. Another veteran is Cheng Pu-kao, who studied in France and was one of the famous avant-garde directors of China in the early Thirties. He is now approaching seventy and has not made a new film for years.

Films enjoying the highest box-office receipts come from China, all of them costume films adapted from operas and filmed in colour. In 1962, *Dream of the Red Chamber* came first, grossing more than HK \$800,000. In 1963 it was *The Jade Hairpin*, which grossed HK \$790,000.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE C. SHEN

Kowloon,
Hong Kong.

Norman McLaren Exhibition

SIR,—"Connaissance du Cinéma", the Canadian Cinémathèque and Film Museum recently established in Montreal, has been entrusted with the responsibility of preparing an exhibition devoted to Norman McLaren. It is hoped that this exhibition, together with McLaren's films, will tour many of the important film centres in Europe and North America during 1965.

We would be most grateful if readers of SIGHT AND SOUND having in their possession sketches, dope sheets, letters, drawings, etc. by McLaren would draw the existence of these to our attention. Materials relating to McLaren's work prior to 1941, including actual prints of his very early films, are particularly being sought, as well as programme notes and brochures prepared by film societies and other organisations all over the world and in all languages, relating to the showing of his films.

Documents relating to his work in China and India are sought, and descriptions of experiences in the use of McLaren's films in these countries, in Africa, and in unusual circumstances.

We will be most grateful for the collaboration of *cinéphiles* everywhere, who should write to the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,
GUY L. COTÉ,
President,
Connaissance du Cinéma.

1015 Vanier,
Saint-Laurent, P.Q.,
Canada.

It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, World

SIR,—William and Tania Rose need not give up on critics and need not worry too much about integrity—although there is more speculation in their Winter issue telegram than in the article to which they refer. I did not "knock" *Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* speculatively without seeing a reel of it. I had in fact seen twelve reels of rough cut which, frankly, dismayed me; but that is not the point. I did not intend to "review it" in my comments; I merely permitted myself the faintest prediction that the finished film would not make me feel much better about Hollywood as a place to make interesting independent pictures. The existence of the National Film Board of Canada in Montreal has contributed to the production of such a brilliantly experimental film as Jutra's *A Tout Prendre*. But Kramer's film, and *Cleopatra* (to which I referred in the same context), will do nothing to inspire that sort of activity in Hollywood. That was my point. I do not make a practice of reviewing unfinished films.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN YOUNG
University of California,
Los Angeles 24,
California.

Quibble and Correction

SIR,—Mr. Nowell-Smith's piece on Antonioni is so good that it can readily stand up to a quibble or two, so let me quibble over "the followers of Sartre or Merleau-Ponty earnestly try to put back the essences into existence." Surely if one is going to work on this level of generalisation—risky—it should be the other way round. Perhaps Mr. Nowell-Smith can qualify this statement with, perhaps, a quotation or two?

As for *The Day of the Butterfly*, Mr. Losey tells me that Jeanne Moreau as Eve at no time reads *Le Poesie di T. S. Eliot*. Apparently the book belongs to the hero's fiancée who is old-fashioned, even by Italian standards. My apologies then to Mr. Losey, and to all contemporary courtesans worth their salt.

Yours faithfully,
ERIC RHODE
London, W.8.

Huston's Cardinal

SIR,—I would like to point out to your critic that John Huston's "acting debut" is not in *The Cardinal*. He has appeared in at least one other film (admittedly a small role), *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, which he also directed.

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH BROWN
Edmonton, Alberta,
Canada.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WARNER-PATHE for *The Servant*.
ANGLO AMALGAMATED/WARNER-PATHE for *Masque of the Red Death*,
Nothing But the Best.
M-G-M for *Night Must Fall*, *Lolita*.
20th CENTURY-FOX for *The Visit*.
20th CENTURY-FOX/UNIFRANCE for *Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *Irma la Douce*.
MIRISCH/UNITED ARTISTS for *A Shot in the Dark*.
BLC/BRITISH LION for *The Caretaker*.
BLC/COLUMBIA for *Dr. Strangelove*.
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Spartacus*.
RANK/UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL for *Marnie*.
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Sex Can Be Difficult*.
CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *The Lizards*, *Le Joli Mai*, *I Fidanzati*.
BARGATE FILMS for *Il Posto*.
ROMULUS FILMS for *The Pumpkin Eater*.
CONNOISSEUR FILMS for *Le Soupirant*.
UNIFRANCE FILM for *Les Plus Belles Escroqueries du Monde*, *La Peau Douce*,
A Cause, A Cause d'une Femme.
ROME-PARIS FILMS/CHAMPION FILMS for *Le Doulos*.
EDISONVOLTA/BBC for *Time Stood Still*.
INSEL FILM, MUNICH for *Speed*.
SHOCHIKU for photograph of Yasujiro Ozu.
GALATEA/22 DICEMBRE for photograph of Lina Wertmüller.
TITANUS for photograph of Ermanno Olmi.
LOUIS MARCORELLES for photographs of Paule Delsol and Jean-Luc Godard.
GIDEON BACHMANN for 8½ and photographs of Federico Fellini.
GIULIO CESARE CASTELLO for *Il Deserto Rosso*.
MICHAEL WESSEN for *Les Vampires*.

CORRESPONDENTS

HOLLYWOOD: Albert Johnson
ITALY: Giulio Cesare Castello
FRANCE: Louis Marcorelles
SCANDINAVIA: Aito Makinen
SPAIN & PORTUGAL: Francisco Aranda
POLAND: Boleslaw Michalek
SOLE AGENTS for U.S.A.: Eastern News Distributors, 255 Seventh Avenue,
New York 1, N.Y.
PRINTED BY Brown Knight & Truscott Ltd., London, England.
BLOCKS BY W. F. Sedgwick Ltd., London.
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES (4 issues), 18s. including postage.
U.S.A.: \$3.50. Price per copy in United States, 85 cents.
PUBLICATION DATES: 1st January, 1st April, 1st July, and 1st October.
Overseas Editions: 12th of these months.

A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films of special interest to *SIGHT AND SOUND* readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars

- **ALL THE WAY HOME** (Paramount) James Agee's nostalgic account of family life in a small Tennessee town at the time of the First World War, given a good deal of charm by Boris Kaufman's atmospheric camera and the performances of Jean Simmons, Robert Preston and Aline MacMahon. The direction, alas, makes it look all too like a TV play. (Pat Hingle, Michael Kearney; director, Alex Segal.)
- *ANATOLIAN SMILE, THE** (Warner-Pathé) From Anatolian village to New York shoe-shine stand, with a young Greek travelling ardently towards the American promised land. Made by Elia Kazan as a kind of family tribute, with such obvious emotional commitment that one feels a brute to remain unharmed. (Stathis Giallelis, Linda Marsh, Katharine Balfour.)
- CAPTAIN NEWMAN** (Rank) Gregory Peck as the deeply understanding chief of the psychiatric ward at an Army Air Base in World War Two. Illustrating all the humour and heartbreak of war, etc. (Tony Curtis, Angie Dickinson, Eddie Albert; director, David Miller. Technicolor Print.)
- **CARETAKER, THE** (BLC/British Lion) Pinter's play given a fairly straightforward treatment, very faithful to the original, and shot in a real attic which nevertheless looks a bit like a studio. Good theatrical playing. (Alan Bates, Donald Pleasence, Robert Shaw; director, Clive Donner.)
- CARRY ON JACK** (Warner-Pathé) The "Carry On" routine transferred to Nelson's Navy and period costume. Kiss Me, Hardy, and all that. (Bernard Cribbins, Juliet Mills, Charles Hawtrey, Kenneth Williams; director, Gerald Thomas. Eastman Colour.)
- *CEREMONY, THE** (United Artists) A basically rather good story, about the last-minute rescue from a Tangier condemned cell of a man whom the authorities are determined to execute, ruined by Laurence Harvey's I Am Orson Welles direction and a good deal of pretentious dialogue. Bits come through when it forgets about Cinema and Significance, and the prison setting is loweringly impressive. (Laurence Harvey, Sarah Miles, Robert Walker.)
- CHALK GARDEN, THE** (Rank) Enid Bagnold's wordy and theatrical melodrama of manners defeats the camera. Hayley Mills and Edith Evans overact irrepressibly on the pretty Sussex cliffs, while Deborah Kerr's eternal governess struggles with some leaden lines. (John Mills, Elizabeth Sellars; director, Ronald Neame. Technicolor.)
- **CHARADE** (Rank) Silk-lined comedy-thriller, with Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant involved in Paris treasure-hunt after wartime loot. Indefatigably gay dialogue; intermittent rough stuff; all in Donen's sleekest manner. (Walter Matthau. Technicolor.) *Reviewed.*
- CHARGE IS MURDER, THE** (M-G-M) Richard Chamberlain, doffing hospital white for legal black, successfully defends a man accused of murder. A good, atmospheric opening soon yields to Dr. Kildareism. (Nick Adams, Claude Rains, Joan Blackman; director, Boris Sagal. Panavision.)
- CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED** (M-G-M) Sequel to *Village of the Damned*, with six other-worldly children, possessed of all manner of special powers, holed up in a bombed church and defying the military. Some good ideas, but execution ragged and a bit given to hammering the obvious. (Ian Hendry, Barbara Ferris; director, Anton Leader.)
- CLEOPATRA** (Fox) The film which makes it all too apparent that with £14 million, any amount of assorted talent, extravagant locations, and a plot-line sanctified by Shaw and Shakespeare, it's still possible to make a pretty dull movie. (Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Rex Harrison; director, Joseph L. Mankiewicz. DeLuxe Color, Todd A-O.)
- ****DR. STRANGELOVE** (BLC/Columbia) Stanley Kubrick's dazzlingly clever account of what *might* happen if someone pressed the button. Makes most so-called satire look juvenile, by remaining diamond hard, giving no quarter to anyone, and preserving a shiver behind every laugh. (Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, Sterling Hayden.)
- *EVERY NIGHT OF THE WEEK** (Gala/Miracle) High-jinks in a small Italian town revolving around an ex-brothel and its ex-inmates. Echoes of Maupassant, plus a bright neo-realist surface which keeps it lively at least for half the time. (Michèle Mercier, Ettore Manni; director, Giuseppe Orlandini.)
- ****FIDANZATI, I** (Contemporary) A young workman takes a job in Sicily; his fiancée stays behind in Milan . . . A dauntingly simple subject, illuminated not only by Olmi's meticulous detail but by the way he jumps the time barrier to make memory subjective. (Carlo Cibrini, Anna Canzi.)
- **FUNNY SIDE OF LIFE, THE** (Columbia) Second Harold Lloyd compilation film, including most of *The Freshman*. Immaculately timed gags; splendid final sequence in which Lloyd saves the day in the ball-game. (Jobyna Ralston; various directors.)
- HOT ENOUGH FOR JUNE** (Rank) Dirk Bogarde as a reluctant spy, being chased all round an Italianate Prague by the Czech secret police. Introduced as a spoof of the James Bond cult; soon lapses into old-fashioned japes (from Robert Morley) and Iron Curtain adventures. (Sylvia Koscina, Leo McKern; director, Ralph Thomas. Eastman Colour.)
- *HOW THE WEST WAS WON** (M-G-M/Cinerama) Bulging with stars and shivering at the seams, the first Cinerama story film mixes eye-catching spectacle with slabs of static narrative. Ford's Civil War sequence comes closest to taming the giant screen. (Debbie Reynolds, James Stewart, Carroll Baker; directors, Henry Hathaway, John Ford, George Marshall. Technicolor.)
- INCREDIBLE JOURNEY, THE** (Disney) Artless story of a trek across Canada by two dogs and a cat in search of their home. Striking star performance by Tao, the Siamese cat, but otherwise mainly for doting animal-lovers. (Emile Genest, John Drainie; director, Fletcher Markle. Technicolor.)
- **IRMA LA DOUCE** (United Artists) Non-musical version of the play, surprisingly softened up by Billy Wilder to suggest that all is really innocence in the Rue Casanova. Excellent Trauner sets; captivating performance by Shirley MacLaine. (Jack Lemmon, Lou Jacobi. Panavision, Technicolor.) *Reviewed.*
- *IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD** (United Artists) Three-hour feast of repetitive fun, consisting mainly of car chases and crashes, with a few beatings-up thrown in; but the interminable cast list provides some actor-spotting fun. Single projector Cinerama without the joins, but with curved screen now offering bizarre distortions. (Spencer Tracy, Milton Berle, Ethel Merman, Mickey Rooney; director, Stanley Kramer. Technicolor, Ultra Panavision presented in Cinerama.)
- ***JOLI MAI, LE** (Contemporary) Chris Marker's account of Paris during the month of May, 1962, as seen through a series of interviews with citizens about their lives and current events, with Paris itself an important actor. Cinéma-vérité, but also very much Chris Marker, and including some of his beloved cats. *Reviewed.*
- *LAWRENCE OF ARABIA** (BLC/Columbia) David Lean, Sam Spiegel and Robert Bolt's massive reconstruction of the desert campaigns. Impeccably academic direction and a genuine response to the setting, but the whole thing has rather the air of a blockbuster in search of a hero. (Peter O'Toole, Alec Guinness, Jack Hawkins, Anthony Quinn. Technicolor, Super Panavision 70.)
- ***LIZARDS, THE** (Contemporary) Very promising first feature, dazzlingly shot by Di Venanzo, about the triumphs of sloth in a small Italian town. Subject after Fellini; observation after Olmi: net result engagingly individual. (Director, Lina Wertmüller.) *Reviewed.*
- LONG SHIPS, THE** (BLC/Columbia) Long and incredibly dreary spectacle, with Richard Widmark heading a Viking crew in a hunt for a legendary golden bell, and Sidney Poitier as his villainous Moorish adversary. (Russ Tamblyn, Rosanna Schiaffino, Oscar Homolka; director, Jack Cardiff. Technicolor, Technirama.)
- ***MARE, IL** (Academy) Enthusiastically reviewed by Peter John Dyer in *SIGHT AND SOUND* when shown at the London Festival in 1962, Giuseppe Patroni Griffi's first film still looks highly individual and a good deal more Antonioni-esque than anything else made under the master's influence: a brooding, glowing study of love and loneliness set against the dark shores, dazzling buildings and deserted streets of Capri in winter. (Françoise Prévost, Umberto Orsini, Dino Mele.)
- MARY MARY** (Warner-Pathé) Jean Kerr's comedy about a divorced couple who decide to give marriage another try, after two hours of wisecracking and tantrum-throwing. Broadway jokes; Hollywood repertory production. (Debbie Reynolds, Barry Nelson, Michael Rennie; director, Mervyn LeRoy. Technicolor.)
- ****MURIEL** (United Artists) Alain Resnais and Jean Cayrol in Boulogne. Indescribably splendid: go and see for yourself. (Delphine Seyrig, Jean-Pierre Kérien, Jean-Baptiste Thierrée. Eastman Colour.)
- *NOTHING BUT THE BEST** (Warner-Pathé) Comedy about an ambitious young clerk who gets himself taught Top People's folklore, then strangles his mentor with his O.E. tie. Made and acted with verve, even if Frederic Raphael's dialogue is sometimes more smartyboots than smart. (Alan Bates, Denholm Elliott, Millicent Martin; director, Clive Donner. Eastman Colour.) *Reviewed.*
- *SEX CAN BE DIFFICULT** (Gala/Miracle) Three-episode film introducing three new directors, a good deal more subtle than its English title might suggest. The first episode a write-off; the second containing nice performances by Lilli Palmer and Bernhard Wicki; the third, a minor *tour de force* of comic observation by its actor-director. (Directors, Sergio Sollima, Alberto Bonucci, Nino Manfredi.) *Reviewed.*
- *SOUPIRANT, LE** (Connoisseur) First feature by Pierre Etaix, who has moments of acting like Keaton and directing like Clair. Not this good all the time, but early sequences of the reluctant suitor at large in Paris are very funny. (France Arnell, Karin Vesely.) *Reviewed.*
- STOLEN HOURS** (United Artists) Remake of *Dark Victory*, with Susan Hayward as the rich playgirl going blind as a result of a brain tumour, and learning to face death calmly in a fine range of Fabiani costumes. It needs Bette Davis. (Michael Craig, Diane Baker, Edward Judd; director, Daniel M. Petrie. DeLuxe Color.)
- *WHEELCHAIR, THE** (Contemporary) An old man's obsessive desire for a wheelchair to ride around in leads him to thoughts of murder. Erratically directed and very noisy Spanish black comedy, with some good, grim jokes. (Jose Isbert, Luisa Ponte; director, Marco Ferreri.)
- ZULU** (Paramount) Genuinely exciting and very gory reconstruction of the Battle of Rorke's Drift, when a handful of British soldiers repulsed a Zulu army. Characterisation rudimentary, though Nigel Green does splendidly as an unflappable N.C.O. (Stanley Baker, Jack Hawkins, Michael Caine; director, Cy Endfield. Technicolor, Technirama.)

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